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INSTITUTION

213.

Freer Gallery of Art
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ARTISTIC JAPAN.

ARTISTIC JAPAN:

Illustrations and Essays.

COLLECTED BY

S. BING.

VOLUME VI.

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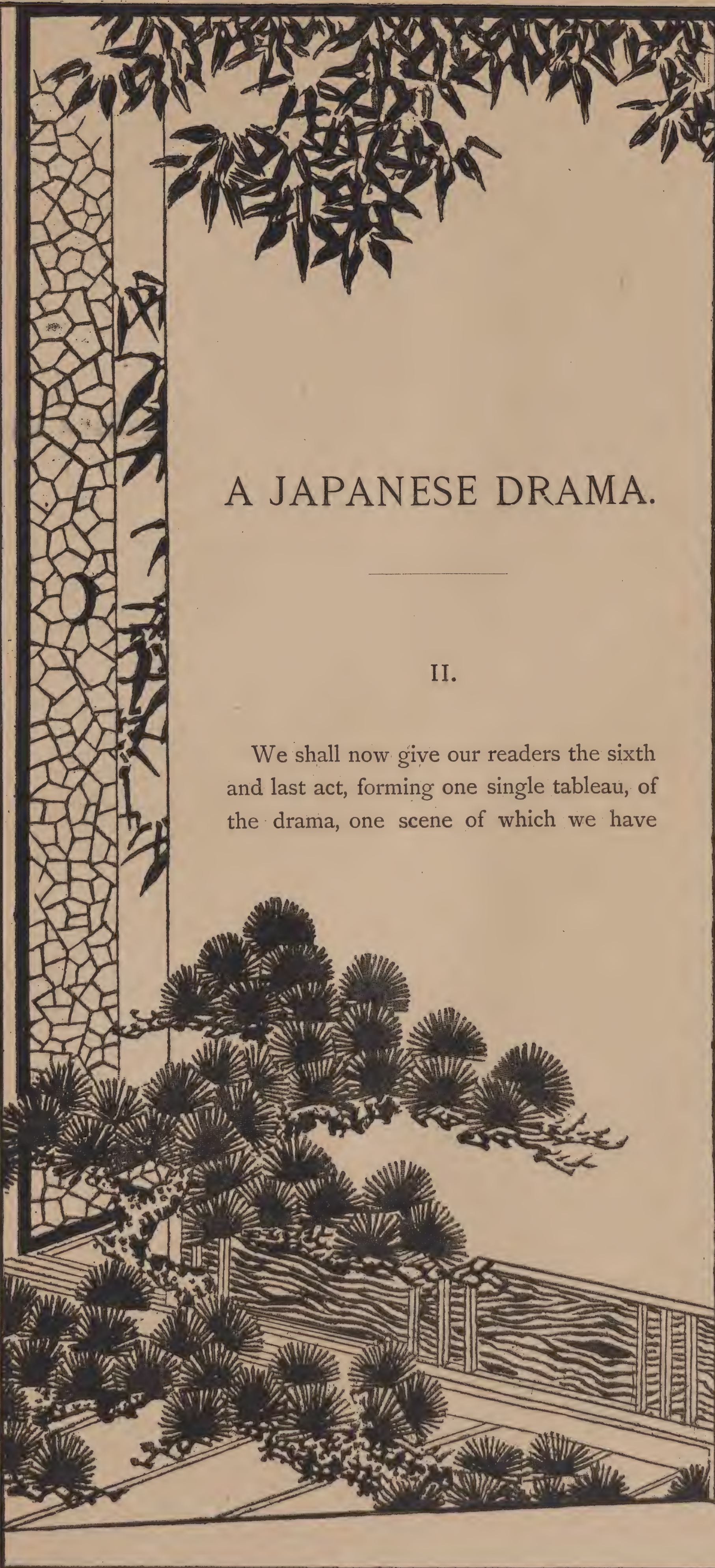
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END OF *ARTISTIC JAPAN.*



A JAPANESE DRAMA.

II.

We shall now give our readers the sixth and last act, forming one single tableau, of the drama, one scene of which we have





Dance in the theatre, by Shōkosai (1800).

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already described.* The remark which we have already made about the want of unity on the Japanese stage must be borne in mind. We must not be surprised that the points of contact between the four first acts and the last two are almost

imperceptible. The reader must, however, be informed that Gorozo, a former *kerai* (vassal) of the *daimyo* Asama, makes his wife Satsuki so unhappy that, availing herself of a right recognized in Japan, she leaves him for another man. Gorozo, who is still fond of his wife, swears to be revenged.

We find him in a street of Kioto. In the foreground is one of those piles of buckets which in Japanese towns are placed every here and there in case of a fire. At a corner of a house burns a lantern. Gorozo enters with a naked sword in one hand. He knows that his wife must pass by this spot on her way to a rendezvous. The street is empty, which just suits his purpose. He climbs up a paling to put out the street lamp. The stage remains in complete darkness. He hides himself behind the buckets. A woman arrives: it is Oju, a friend of Satsuki, whose lantern she has borrowed.† Gorozo mistakes her for his wife, leaps upon her, and kills her. Then he coolly cuts off her head and wraps it up in a bit of stuff‡ which he cuts with his sword off the dress of his victim. He conceals the corpse in the hiding-place where he himself had lain concealed a few minutes before, and ties on his back the bundle containing the head, so as to leave his hands free. There are throughout the scene of the

* I must, however, mention a procession in the fourth act, in order to explain what this procession is. It is the procession of the mistress of the *daimyo* Asama. This is what tourists rarely fail in their notes of travel to call "The Procession of the Empress"—a curious mistake, but one which shows with how much pomp and ceremonial the life of the *demi-monde* was surrounded in old Japan.

Most Japanese pieces contain a scene similar to this one. The remark has therefore been often made by European writers that the Empress is an almost indispensable personage of the Japanese stage; and then, of course, the writer goes on to draw his own conclusions about the manners and customs of the country. Such a mistake can only be explained by utter and unpardonable ignorance of the sacredness amongst Oriental nations of the sovereign power and everything connected with it.

† The reader must know that Oju is at this moment the mistress of the *daimyo* Asama, who has come from Kioto to do homage to the Mikado. It is during this journey of Asama's that the murder related in our last number has been perpetrated.

‡ This piece is one of the big sleeves of the *kimono*, which in the women's dress are particularly long. As this part of the robe forms a pocket, or even a bag, it is peculiarly suitable for the purpose for which Gorozo uses it here.

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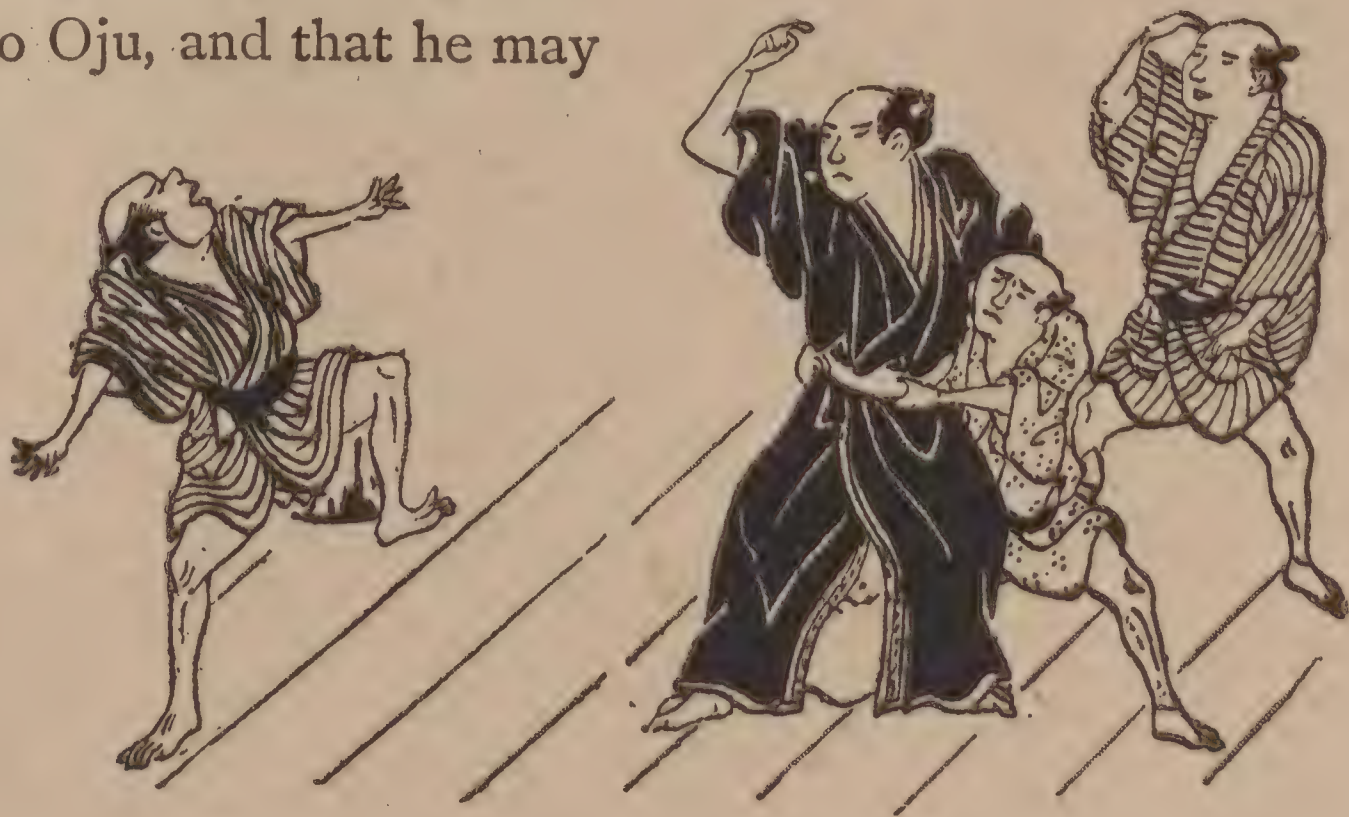
murder and the cutting off of the head a hundred realistic details which we cannot dwell on here. Nothing is left to the spectator's imagination. One cannot help admiring the illusion of this scene of bloodshed.

ACT VI.—One tableau throughout. The interior of Gorozo's house. It is nearly midday.

Gorozo, tired after his exploit of the previous night, has not yet appeared. His servants, who are waiting for him, manifest their surprise.

At last Gorozo appears. He has just got up ; he is not quite wide-awake, and shows this by certain contractions of the muscles which, being natural, are common to all countries. He hears his servants speaking of the murder of Oju by some unknown assassin. An account of the crime has already been printed, and is being sold in the streets. Amazement of Gorozo, who wonders whether he is dreaming or whether he is in the midst of madmen. That there has been a murder he is well aware, since he is himself the murderer ; but the victim is not Oju ; it is his own wife, Satsuki, whom he has killed. He, however, keeps these reflections to himself, not wishing to betray his secret : he makes his servants talk, wishing to see how far their blunder will carry them. One of them passes him the booklet with the story of the crime : he bought it, he says, because he took an interest in Oju ; it cost him five *rin*, including a poem already composed about this dramatic subject. Observe the care which the servant takes to tell the price he has paid for these leaflets. This smallness brings out by contrast the moral situation of the old *kerai*.

Gorozo reads, and gradually his surprise increases. Still no doubt crosses his mind, so sure is he. He believes there has been a mistake on the part of the police and the public : the head having been carried off, it has been impossible, thinks he, to identify the victim ; hence the mistake. He fears, however, that this false news spreading through the town may prove damaging to Oju, and that he may thus incur the wrath of this woman's lover, who is his liege-lord, and whose dependant he still is, although he has been dismissed by him. He begins to wonder if it would not be better to clear up the mistake.



Scene of a play, by Shōkosai (1800).

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He requires to reflect, and sends away his servants. While he is turning the matter over, his old blind mother feels her way in. Then follows a touching scene between these two, destined to prepare a fresh contrast arising from a different order of ideas. A little before we saw a smallness of mind brought to contrast with a great moral agitation; now we see this moral agitation contrasted with the pure and holy tenderness of a mother's love, and with a bitter backward glance over a life full of sorrows. The poor woman relates her unhappy existence; her sorrows have robbed her of her eyes, she has cried so much in her life! But now that she is with her son she is happy. "I wish," says she, in conclusion, "that this happiness may last, and that no ill-luck may befall thee." She goes away, muttering her prayers. Her last words, however, have produced an extraordinary effect on Gorozo. A doubt seizes him; * he casts a glance round at all the issues to make sure that he is quite alone, and that there are no prying eyes watching him; he walks up to, and opens feverishly, a little press in which he has hidden the bundle containing the head; he undoes the wrappings, looks, and staggers back

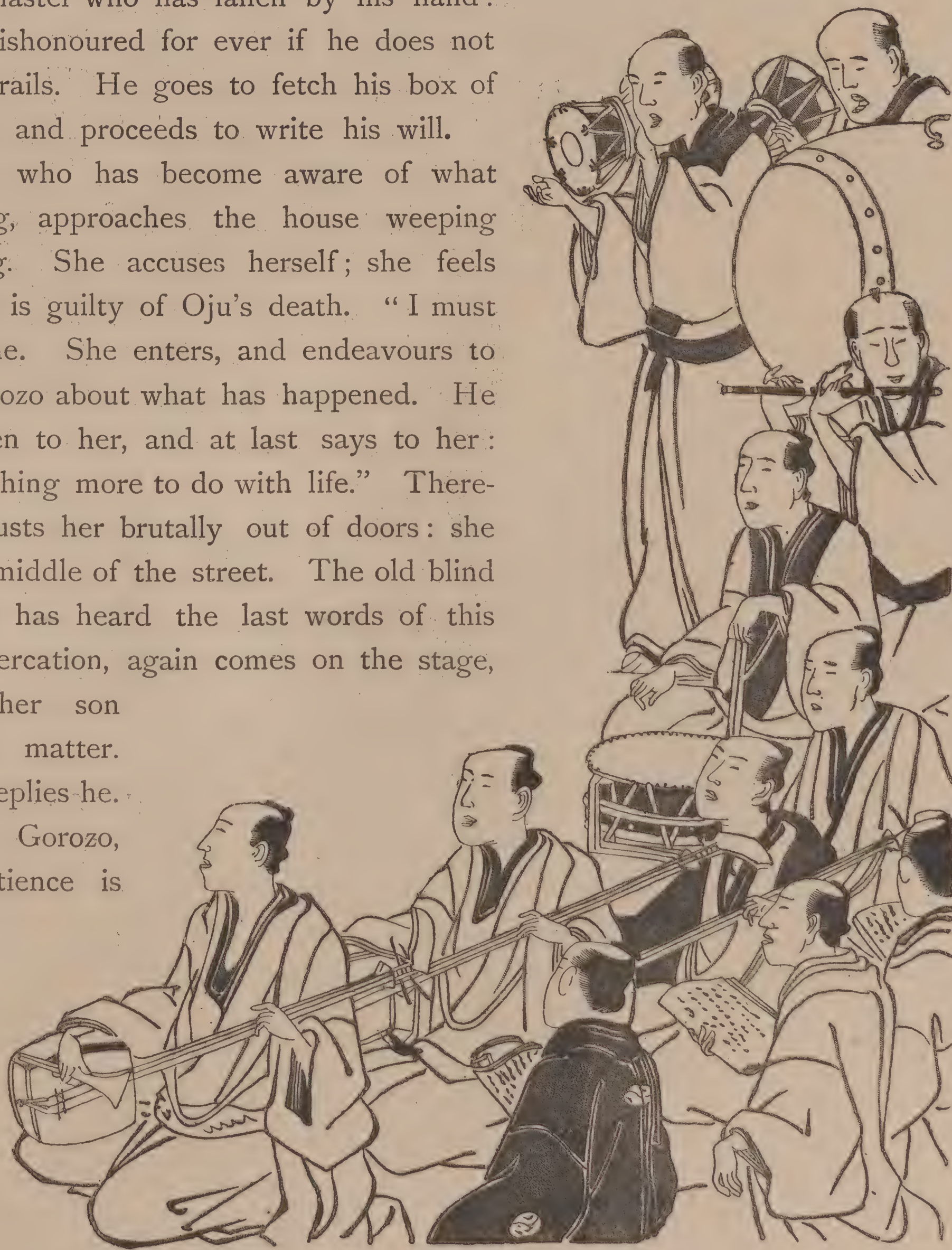
* Superstitious nations dislike wishes of good luck; they seem always to be of ill omen. An evidence of this is the custom prevalent in certain countries of making the sign of the cross or of holding out two fingers to simulate horns when receiving congratulations on past luck or good wishes for the future.

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overwhelmed as he recognises the features of Oju. Three times he returns to look, unable to believe his eyes, and each time his terror is more clearly expressed. The acting in this scene is admirably done by the actor—the same, by the bye, who in the third act played with so much skill the part of the daimyo's mother-in-law.

Gorozo is overcome with grief, and still endeavours to explain his mistake. The lantern was really his wife's lantern; the clothes his victim wore were his wife's clothes. The piece of stuff in which the head was wrapped is there as a proof. Finally he decides that the only course left to him is to die as becomes a brave *samurai*. He owes the sacrifice of his life to the manes of Oju, the mistress of his lord. According to the ancient code of honour there is no room for hesitation. He was free to kill his wife; no one would have had anything to say. By a mistake it is the concubine of his master who has fallen by his hand: he will be dishonoured for ever if he does not open his entrails. He goes to fetch his box of paint-brushes and proceeds to write his will.

Satsuki, who has become aware of what is happening, approaches the house weeping and moaning. She accuses herself; she feels that she too is guilty of Oju's death. "I must die," says she. She enters, and endeavours to speak to Gorozo about what has happened. He will not listen to her, and at last says to her: "I have nothing more to do with life." Thereupon he thrusts her brutally out of doors: she falls in the middle of the street. The old blind woman, who has heard the last words of this domestic altercation, again comes on the stage, and asks her son what is the matter. "Nothing," replies he. She insists. Gorozo, whose impatience is gradually increasing, forgets all



The orchestra, by Toyokouni (1807).

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filial respect, and instead of answering, pushes his poor old mother out into the street as cavalierly as he did his wife a few minutes before. She falls down not far from Satsuki. Gorozo shuts the door and barricades himself from the inside; he does not wish to be disturbed any more. Having finished writing his will, he brings a little table of offerings into the middle



Portraits of actors, by Shōkōsai (1800).

of the room. On it he places the head of Oju, with the face towards the public; he goes to the little family shrine to take some candlesticks and some vases of artificial flowers, which he places on each side of the head: he lights the tapers. All these preparations are carried out without the faintest show of emotion. It is at the moment of death that a *samurai* is especially bound to be calm.

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This done, he draws his sword from its sheath, makes sure that the blade and point are in thoroughly good order, and then sits down facing the funeral altar set up in honour of his victim's head.

A seated posture, with the legs crossed, is that prescribed for *harakiri*, or suicide by opening the entrails. Gorozo begins the operation according to the ritual: there is a ritual for everything. Contrary to a preconceived idea very generally entertained in Europe, it was not the custom to disembowel oneself at a single blow. Suicide from passion or grief was at that time but little known in Japan, perhaps because the other kind of suicide played such a large part in the life of the nation. Suicide was not an act of despair, but an affair of honour. Now honour required that this self-inflicted death should be a slow one, because more courage is required to bear pain and watch the approach of death than to die. So deep was this feeling, and so highly did the *samurai* cherish their honour, that even when they disembowelled themselves in the strictest privacy, they did so as calmly as before an audience. Sometimes a brave *samurai* would cut through his skin and hack his abdomen about for more than an hour before he expired. He fell exhausted, but still breathing: often some kind friend would at this moment give him the finishing stroke. His honour did not suffer thereby.

While Gorozo is thus torturing himself, his wife, who has never stirred from the spot where she had fallen in the street, plunges a dagger into her right breast. This was, according to the ritual, the proper way for a woman to commit suicide. Each in turn declare that they thus sacrifice themselves to the manes of Oju. The old blind mother, who lies prostrate on the ground near Satsuki, is utterly bewildered.





A scene on the stage, seen from the side-wings.—One of the actors, while engaged in looking at himself in a mirror, makes the gestures through the straw of a man hidden in the straw. By Shōkosai (1800).

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She implores an explanation. Her daughter-in-law, mastering her pain, relates how she has been guilty of the crime of high treason, having inadvertently caused the death of her mistress. She did not, it is true, kill her herself, but it was with *her* lantern in her hand, and disguised in *her* dress, that Oju fell. Satsuki feels, therefore, that she owes her life to Oju, and this debt she pays.

The old woman, passing her hands over Satsuki, feels the dagger sticking in her breast. She would fain pull it out. A struggle ensues between the wounded woman and her blind mother-in-law: it is a struggle of desperate grief on the one side and determined resolution on the other.

But the death-rattle is ringing in Gorozo's throat. His mother hears it, and understands that he too is killing himself. She calls. No answer. He has, however, not fainted, for we see him still busy at his terrible task. The blind woman, with pitiful shrieks, endeavours to enter the house. She goes wrong, and comes back again. At last she has her hands on the door; she calls again; still her son remains silent. Making a desperate effort, she bursts in the panel, and tumbles into the middle of the room. She must have broken some limb, but she does not think of that: she is a mother, and her son is dying! He explains to her the reason why he must die. His arguments are so conclusive that the blind woman becomes calm. Mother of a *samurai*, she knows the rules of honour. She knows too that no arguments of hers could make her son change his resolution. Meanwhile Satsuki has dragged herself into the room.

Two servants of Gorozo rush in breathless. They bring a piece of good news which, despite their emotion at their master's condition, they deliver. A brigand has been arrested: he is accused of having murdered Oju: sentence is about to be pronounced. This news is welcomed joyfully by the dying man and woman.—“It is a farewell present.”*

* In Japan, when a traveller has remained even for a few hours only, either in an inn or a private house, it is customary for him to receive from his hosts “a parting present.” What a touching idea is this of the two dying people accepting a piece of good news as a farewell present on their journey to the next world!



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The mother, understanding that at the bottom of all this there is a quarrel between the pair, endeavours to reconcile them *in extremis*. Her part is deeply pathetic. Her children will not at first yield to her entreaties ; but they hold one last conversation : their thoughts return to the time when they loved each other, and used to sing and play together. One air in particular—an air of their happy days—haunts their memory : they decide to die playing it. The wife's wound is bandaged up ; the mangled body of the husband is raised up, the gaping wound stopped up as well as may be, and a linen cloth tied round the body. His flute is brought to him ; to her her *koto*. They play—he held up by a servant, she by her mother-in-law. Between them is the little funeral altar, with the head on it seeming to listen to them. The way in which this scene is played is perfect ; the actors succeed in combining most skilfully the horrible and the pathetic. Now and again Gorozo's breath fails him, and his flute halts, quavering in the middle of a note ; but, by an effort of will, he continues. At last the wave of death sweeps over both at once ; the flute falls ; the *koto* ceases to vibrate. The poor blind mother gropes for the hands of the husband and wife : she gets hold of them, and places them one within the other. They exchange one last glance of mutual pardon and die united.

A. LEQUEUX.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate CAD is taken from a work by Toyokuni, entitled "Customs of the Day," two volumes, published in Yeddo in 1802. It represents the hour of rest of the people engaged in gathering the rice. Rice is, as everyone knows, the staple food of the Far East. It is gathered very much as in Europe, but it is chiefly women who are employed to cut the ears, which the men carry away in baskets; heavy work in the damp heat across a swamp of rice-fields. It may easily be imagined how great an importance the harvest of this essential element of their food takes in the mind of the people, and that artists should have frequently treated it. To them it affords a pretext for landscapes with far-spreading horizons shut in by the blue outline of lofty mountains. In this composition Toyokuni has skilfully made the most of the tall stalks, giving just a glimpse of the landscape over the ears, thus throwing back the distance a long way behind this solid foreground.

Two women have stopped working, and are taking a rest on a mat stretched out on the ground on account of the damp. Another brings them their meal, which she carries on her head in one of those trays shaped like a shallow bucket, which the Japanese are so clever at making. She has, besides, a big teapot in one hand containing perhaps only pure water. The artist has curiously obliged himself to keep his composition in a yellow tone, which recalls the general aspect of the country at this moment of the year. It must be observed that the ears of rice when quite ripe are not green but of a beautiful golden yellow.

Plate AJD represents the Japanese jay (*garrulus japonicus*) perched on a branch of magnolia in flower. In the whole series of Japanese birds which we have reproduced it may be noticed that the winged fauna of Japan differs but little from that of Europe. There are few of our birds which are not found in Japan. There are, however, certain kinds there which we do not possess in the wild state. Our readers have had ample occasions of observing that the Japanese went in for the realistic study of animal life, particularly of birds, long before the Western World had opened its eyes to the fact that Nature even in her tiniest creatures is always well worth close observation.

Plate BII is a reproduction of two studies of foliage taken from a botanical treatise in seven volumes, the illustrations in which are confined to leaves. The broad simple modelling of these allows us to recognise the plant at a glance. On the left we have the Kamschatka plantain, the *Sagittarius* and the Asiatic plantain; on the right the Japanese acuba.

Plate CAE is a composition by Utamaro. This page speaks for itself, and requires no description. In Japan dreams come, not from the brain, but from the heart. This is why the smoke, in which the subject of the dream is wrapped, always comes out of the throat.* The painter of women used to take a rest from his usual work by improvising these humorous scenes, which were certain to raise a laugh. There is no need to be Japanese to be amused both by the

* Or rather, as M. Edmond de Goncourt has observed in a recent study on Utamaro, from the stomach. The Japanese had probably observed the correlation which exists between dreams and the state of the stomach.

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scene itself and the grumpy face of the good man whose cat has stolen the fish cooked for his supper. Everything, even the size of the bamboo destined to chastise Puss, enlists our sympathy on the side of the thief. Happily all this is only the dream of a cat fast asleep.

Plate BJD is a reproduction of a piece of brocaded silk ornamented with peacock's feathers, considerably toned down by time. Faded though the colours be, we can still form some idea from what remains visible of the design, of the splendour, and good taste which the upper classes in feudal times displayed in their dress. The huge size of these ornamental designs was eminently conducive to a serious and majestic dignity, to a striking grandeur of attitude in all official ceremonies in days which are still comparatively near us.

Plate BFJ is a representation (about two-thirds of the real size) of a statuette in pottery of the hermit Dharma. The material employed is a brown earth with a compact and rugged grain, but lending itself easily to modelling purposes, and at the same time rendering the rough appearance which the skin of the holy hermit must have presented. The robe in which Dharma is draped is covered with a beautiful brown enamel.

We have told (No. XXVII., p. 46*) the legend of Dharma. No one will therefore be surprised to see him represented in this attitude, the saint having finished by losing his legs from having remained squatting down for so many years without ever once getting up.

This piece has a seal impressed in the paste underneath, the meaning of which is Korakou-yen.

Plate BHJ. A Chinese bronze vase. The reproduction is four-fifths of the real size. It rests on three feet, and has on each side an elephant's head, the trunk of which bends round to form a handle. The ornamentation is composed of lines representing a fantastic bird, all the intervals between these lines are filled by a Greek pattern, and round the edge runs a band of Chinese characters. The patina is a dark brown, and the massive casting gives this piece a comparatively great weight.

It is apparently a temple vase used in the sacrifices which used to be performed three or four hundred years ago.

Plate BHI represents a piece of Kioto ware of the 18th century, modelled by the potter with great suppleness into the shape of a little bag tied with a girdle. The groundwork of the enamel is a kind of grey crackle, the leaves are in green enamel, the iris flowers in blue; little curved lines of gold represent the ripples of the water by the side of which these irises grow. The girdle is a dull red, and the general effect is very pleasing and soft in tone.

This object cannot have been of any great practical use; it could, however, be used as a pot, for the portion above the girdle can be taken off and forms a cover.

Plate BAE is a reproduction of an ancient mask from the temple of Nara, which dates from the 8th or 9th century. We observe in this piece all the strength, all the sincerity of feeling which characterises the early artists. The knife was driven sharply, almost fiercely, into the wood, without any tenderness, but with a strong sure touch only equalled by the powerful imagination which conjured up these strange faces, impressive by reason of their expressive, lifelike character. These wonderful sculptors undertook to give intensely human expressions to types which seem to belong to some realms outside our earthly globe.

In Plate ADB peony leaves and flowers are intertwined with the windings of a liana, which covers all the ground with a kind of irregular arabesque.

* See also No. XXVII., p. 353, a sketch representing, in a bristling fierce guise, the same personage.

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BFJ. Statuette of Dharma.	

Number XXXII. will contain an article by M. Gustave Geffroy, on "Japanese Landscape Painting."















BHI





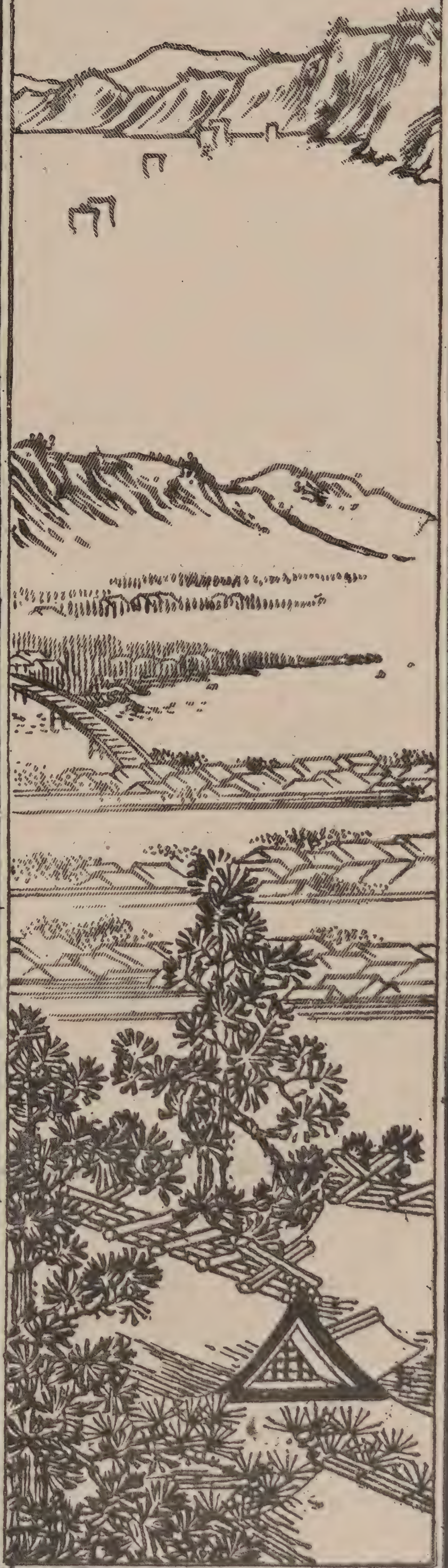




JAPANESE LANDSCAPE PAINTERS.

I.

In the garden, in the valley, the Japanese gathers together all the aspects of Nature, and sets up scenery of infinite variety. He applies himself to reduce the immensity of creation to habitable and tangible proportions. It would seem as if, here,



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in the seclusion of this little nook, the owner of this patch of ground, penetrated with a sense of relative proportions, took pleasure in a summary and found satisfaction in the possible. Within this narrow space, which can be so quickly gone over in a short stroll of a few steps, everything is represented.

There is that strong and all-pervading element, the earth. This earth, hollowed here, levelled there by the hand of man, reproduces in miniature the rhythmic undulations of the soil, the slopes of mountain ranges, the level sweep of plains. There is that liquid magic element water, leaping, babbling, brawling. The tiny streamlet meanders like a river flowing down a winding bed, runs over a slope of ground, and falls in a cascade all foam and spray; leaps up again, then sinks to rest and deepens in a miniature expanse which imitates the peaceful lake and the calm bay. In the beds and on the slopes grow a thousand trees, shrubs, and plants, a wealth of flowers. Side by side with Nature, the artificial triumphs. In order to possess every component part and to create an imaginary forest, the fanciful and patient gardener has done violence to Nature, constrained the sap and forced into a dwarf existence trees with lofty trunks and wide-spreading branches. He has preserved their physiognomy, but this physiognomy, complete and characteristic as it is, is reduced to miniature dimensions. All these dwarf shoots, from the cherry-tree in blossom to the oak in its many-coloured autumn tints, grow in pots which a man can carry about, put in, and take out at will. His eye is amused by this dwarfing of the free forces of vegetation; but his imagination revels in these images which call up others, in this artistic transposition which by a kind of child's play gives him the changeful spectacle of the universe. He continues to lay out his scenery, plants rushes on the banks of his miniature river, bids the marsh flowers bloom, and sets up in the midst of the water a stone clad with mosses such as clothe the cliffs. Whether he looks near or far he is in the midst of Nature. This miniature garden is wrapped in luminous atmosphere. Over it pass the breezes of summer and the storms of winter, slanting showers of rain, stinging storms of hail, silent



View of Fujiyama, by Hokusai.

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falls of snow. In spring, the peach and the plum-tree put forth their myriad blossoms like swarms of pink and white butterflies, and tangled chrysanthemums glow like gold under the autumn sunshine. In the distance there is the horizon of the mountains, or the horizon of the sea.

How could a people with such a taste for the earth and its adornments of green things and of flowers fail to be fond of landscape in its art? This passion for landscape gardening, handed down for generations from father to son, was surely bound to gain in refinement and strength amongst those who fixed on paper or in lacquer the sights familiar to their eyes. To tell the story of Japanese landscape-painting would be to tell that of Japanese Art itself. The life in the open air mingles man and nature together in the Far East, and sets humanity against a background of earth, sky, and water. All Japanese artists have therefore been landscape painters, whether they dedicated themselves to figures or studied flowers, fish, insects, birds, beasts. Beyond the flowers we get a peep of garden, a stretch of country. The fish lives in the still water, in the eddy, in the wave, swims up a rapid, is surrounded by stones, grass, sea-weed; sometimes the surface of the water



A Japanese at the entrance of his garden.

is indicated, the bank of the river, the horizon, the sky. Through the branches of the tree round which a snake twines itself, in which a bird perches, or a monkey swings, we see one above the other, fields, woods, and mountain-tops. The slim-limbed deer wanders through woodlands where

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the ground is strewn with leaves and pine-needles. The royal tiger, denizen of the ravines and monarch of the solitude, glides with lithesome body or frowns fiercely in rocky valleys, whose dark gullies afford him ambush. Man marching to war, travelling, walking, working or amusing himself, gives occasion to the artist to reproduce the whole panorama of Japan. He ploughs the fields, goes up and down rivers, climbs a mountain, fills some quarter of a town with the noise of his craft, steers his boat over the sea, steps across the flowery threshold of a temple, amuses himself in the humour and in the sights of the streets, presses round the gate of the Yoshiwara, giving access to that gaily lighted pleasure-quarter. So marked is this tendency, so strong is this preoccupation, that it is no rare thing to find landscape introduced into the treatment of interiors. The round bow-window of the apartment affords a permanent frame to be filled up by views over towns, many-coloured orchards, fields, mountains, lakes, the sea, the seasons.

A complete classification is therefore out of the question, or we would have to bring together all the objects, all the books, all the engravings in

which there are a few strokes of landscape, a network of boughs, a drift of passing clouds. We shall therefore limit ourselves to citing the names of those who have more particularly distinguished themselves as landscape painters, and to a brief mention of their works. It seemed to us necessary, however, before noting individual details and the aspects of certain talents, to go over the surroundings in the midst of which this art saw the light, and to endeavour to enter, without erudite pre-occupations, into the subtle souls of the islanders of Japan. A minute and incessant study of the productions of that country is the best way to place ourselves in communication with these great artists. Their existence, and the workings of their brains are revealed to those who spend a large part of their



A man taking a walk, by Hokusai.

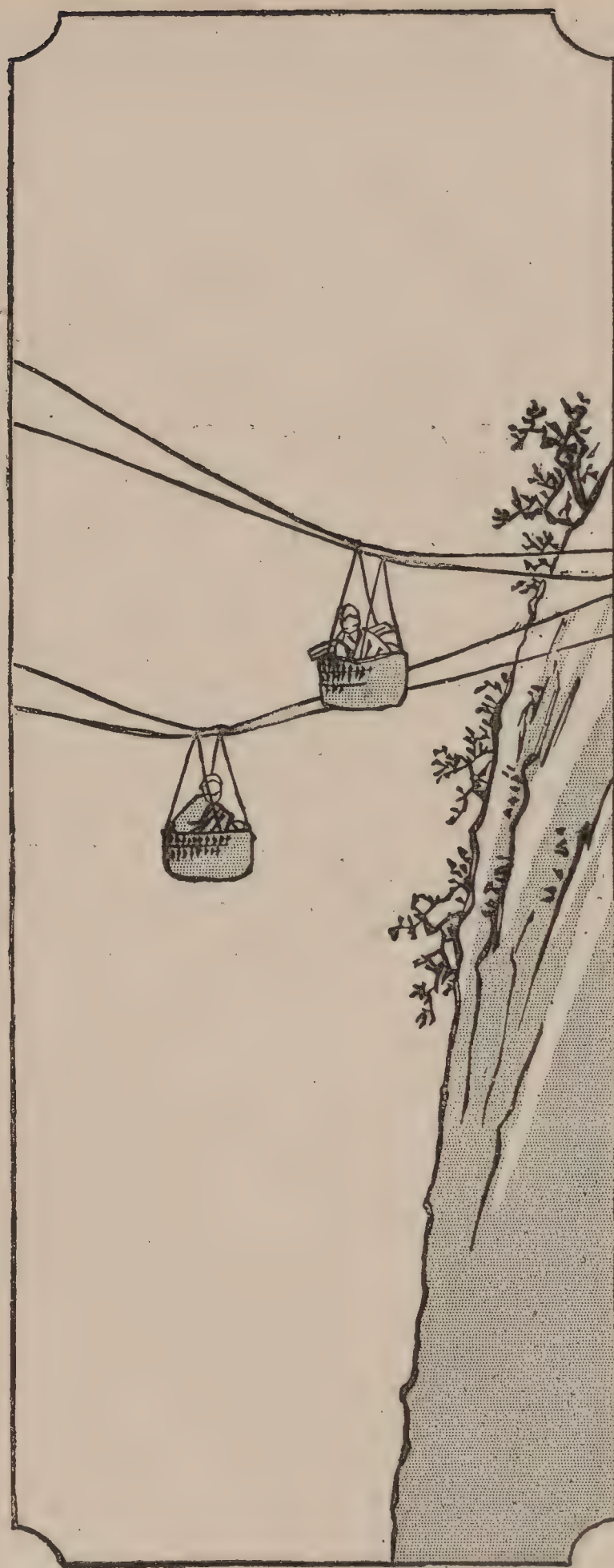
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lives in the contemplation of the memorials and legacies which they have left in decided lines on loose sheets, whereon they have fixed broad perspectives and essential details. It is this impression which will be scattered through the following rapid lines. There is, however, one means of estimation and comparison which can be given, and this I shall take care not to neglect.

These landscapes, drawn and coloured by the painters of Japan, were seen by the poets too, and set forth in short pieces of verse, distiches, or quatrains, in which they convey their impressions. All—and here we have already one point common to both—all, both painters and poets, are brief in the means they employ, most anxious to avoid saying too much, eager to catch the rapid and exact effect of the synthesis, and leave to the imagination the task of finishing some tract to be traversed. When the poets wish to render some emotion of the soul, to awaken some memory, a regret for some lost joy, a pang of sorrow, they seldom fail to introduce a landscape into their verses, or else some metaphor taken from nature to explain the state of mind and heart. They invoke the cloud drifting over the mountain top veiling the moon, the fisherman's bark, the reeds on the river's bank, the noise of a ship borne along on the crest of a wave, banks of clouds, the glory of the setting sun. A garment watered with tears is compared to "a rock in the open sea," or to "a buoy in the harbour of Naniva."* In some verses of good wishes for the New Year, we find this expression :—

"May your happiness be as inexhaustible as the snow that falls on this day of awakening spring-time."

Another piece of good wishes and happiness expresses fear by the following figure :—



Crossing a ravine, by Hiroshigé.

* These and the following quotations are taken from the Japanese Anthology, poems, ancient and modern, translated into French and published with the original text by Léon de Rosny, professor in the college of Oriental languages (Paris Maisonneuve et C^{ie}, 1871).

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"I dare not believe that my happiness will last eternally,
Like that white mist which always hangs over the mountain of Mifuné, above
the waterfall."

When the Empress Dzi-tô, who reigned from 690-96, composed a piece of poetry in honour of the Emperor Ten-bu, she invoked the evenings and the mornings in which her deceased husband used to stand and gaze at the maple trees :—

"O my great liege lord, master of the world, at eve thou wouldst turn thy looks towards the trees with the reddening leaves on the hill of the Spirits, and ere the break of day thine eyes sought them. To-day, thine eyes will seek them

again ; to-morrow, thou wilt gaze at them again."

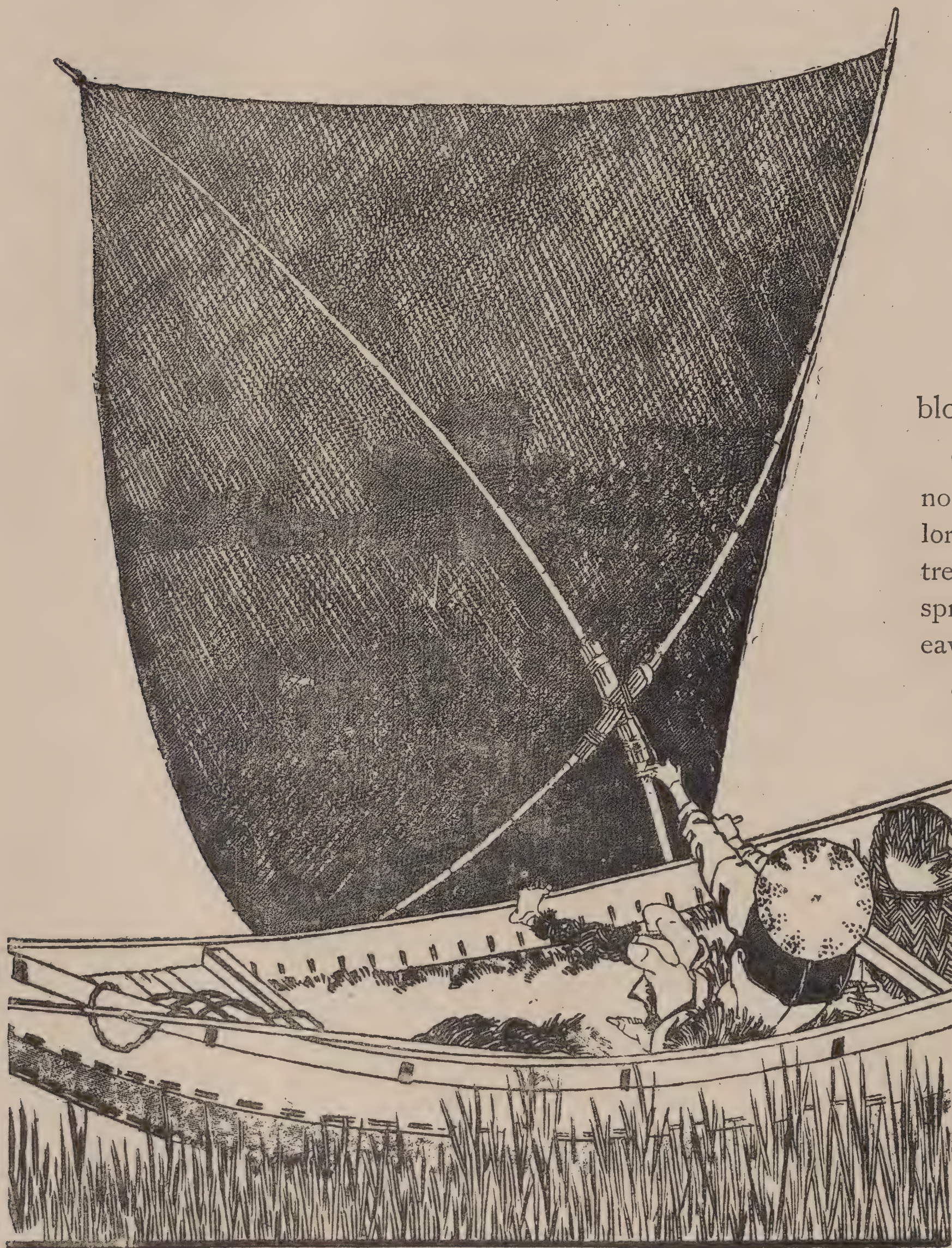
In the collection of the Hundred Poets, the man who has just left his home thinks of the next burst of blossom :—

"Though my palace be no longer inhabited by its lord, forget not, O plum trees, to blossom in the spring-time under the eaves of its roof."

"The injustice of this world" is set forth in the following striking manner :—

"I think of hiding myself in the depths of the mountains ; and even there the stag weeps."

Abe-no Nakamaro, who in 716, was one of an



Fisherman stretching his net, by Hokusai.

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embassy sent to China, watches the moon rising during the farewell banquet offered to him. He is about to return to his own country, he thinks of the dear familiar spots whence he used to watch the same silent uprising of the planet, and composes these verses:—

“In the vault of the heavens at this moment when I gaze at it, is it not over the mountain of Mikasa in the land of Kasuga that the moon is rising?”

In the poem of the *Pine-trees*, love is breathed thus:—

“When I have left thee, if I learn that thou awaitest me on the top of the mountain of the land of Inaba, where the pine-trees grow, then I will return at once.”

And in the *Leaves of Wakana*—

“For you, O my mistress, I have been to cull in spring-time in the meadows the leaf of Wakana; snow fell on my robe.”

Old age is portrayed under the following figure:—

“The snow which falls is not that of the blossoms scattered by the storm; it is that of my years.”

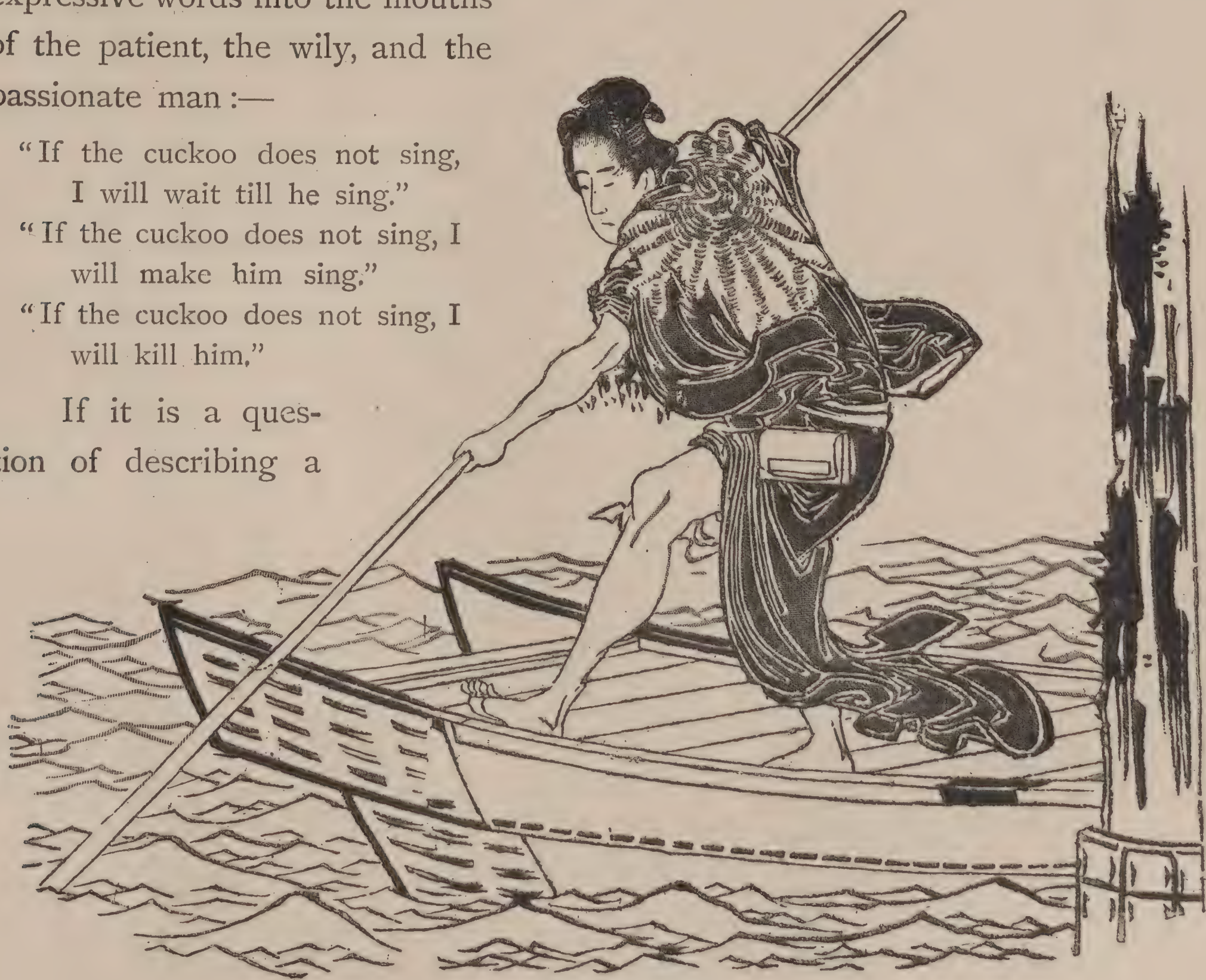
There are poems entitled, *While Watching the Moon, Footprints in the Snow*. To express the different characters of three Imperial lieutenants, the poet seeks a comparison in the depth of the woods, and puts the following expressive words into the mouths of the patient, the wily, and the passionate man:—

“If the cuckoo does not sing,
I will wait till he sing.”

“If the cuckoo does not sing, I
will make him sing.”

“If the cuckoo does not sing, I
will kill him.”

If it is a question of describing a



Boatman, by Hokusai.

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courtesan, as in the popular song of *The Study of Flowers at Yoshiwara*, all nature is taxed to furnish comparisons, the snow, the mist, the leaves of the willow, the blossoms of the fruit trees. If the poet moralizes, the most philosophic declaration is inseparable from the praise of nature. This double sentiment breathes in *Autumn Thoughts*:—

“If you would know the spot where rational nature is acquired,
Go seek it in feelings of humanity and wisdom.
The air is pure, the hills and the brooks are fair;
The wind is high, nature is sweet with scents;
The swallows’ nests have lost their summer tint;
The wild geese in their pool raise their autumn chaunt.
Inspired by Nature, those who love the forests of bamboo
Care nothing for the world’s esteem nor for the world’s contempt.”



The rapids, by Hokusai.

Lastly, if we would find in a poet a painter’s vision, here are two lines on the wild geese:—

“The wild geese, winging their flight through the mist of the clouds,
Seem to me like letters traced in flowing ink.”

We have said enough to give a foretaste of the poetry of Japanese landscape painters, of the pleasure which may be derived from the contemplation of their extraordinary works. It was necessary to show the characteristics of the Japanese, their common qualities, their kindred pre-

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occupations. The quality of vision, the pleasure of the eyes and of the mind, are carried to the highest point and proved

with a transcendent mastery by the painters. But they will be more easily perceived and better understood after having heard them expressed by the poets, after having seen them mingled with the existence of the peaceful and refined man whom we portrayed in the opening lines of this article in his garden, amid babbling waters and the scent of flowers.

GUSTAVE GEFFROY.



Crossing a ford, by Keisai Yeisen.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate CAB is taken from a volume of poetry, the outcome of an essentially Japanese custom. At certain periods of the year poetical competitions were opened on a given subject. When the competition was over these poems were published in a volume, illustrated by the best artists of the day. This one was illustrated by Utamaro with six plates, all on the same subject as that given to the competing poets: the snow.

Utamaro has here taken for his subject a dyke, the elevation of which hides the plain beyond, and only allows the tops of a torii and of some trees to peep above it. The country is entirely covered with snow, and even two fishermen in their boat have their hats and their rough straw cloaks covered with white flakes. Utamaro has taken care to put in the sky a long flight of wild geese, which only make their appearance when the winter cold sets in. In the mind of a Japanese, these birds of passage winging their way through the sky would raise a whole world of sweet and melancholy sentiments.

Plate CAA is a print by Harunobu, the painter of young girls and tender passions. In this case it is no longer as before (Plate BHE, No. 27), a spring idyl on the flowery banks of a stream. Love, however, belongs to every season, and amidst the snow falling in big flakes advances a couple of young lovers clinging close to each other under the shelter of the same umbrella. The artist has carefully sought the contrast between the white robe—so delicately ornamented with a pattern of cherry-blossom—of the girl and the black mantle worn by the young man. The contrast is striking, although free from violence or hardness, on the grey ground dotted with falling snowflakes. The gracefulness of this composition, free from all accessory details, shows in the people which could appreciate such delicate work a vein of tender poetic feeling which remained intact side by side with that love of the ludicrous which we have often pointed out as characteristic of the character of the Japanese.

The three subjects of Plate CBJ are taken from an illustrated work in three volumes, by Hokusai, the *Tenkin oraï*. The first of these three fragments shows us an essentially feminine occupation—the weaving of stuffs. The weather has allowed of the looms being set up in the garden, and the housewives are busy in the bosom of their families, while the children play under their eyes, and the fowls peck. The second subject introduces us to a calling unknown in our country—that of story-teller. The story-teller keeps a shop to which admittance is obtained by payment, and there he relates adventures wonderful or ludicrous to an attentive audience. Lastly, in the third fragment, boatmen are punting a boat full of travellers up a river swollen by winter rain.

Plate CBE is taken from the *Shaka go itchidai dzuyé*, a work in six volumes, illustrated by Hokusai, which narrates the life of Buddha Sakya Muni (in Japanese Shaka). This page represents the temptation of Buddha by the devil. The Evil Spirit assailed Buddha just as Satan did our Lord, on a mountain where he was in meditation. The Divinity is not to be

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touched by all the offers, all the promises of the Enemy, and remains serene, motionless. It is interesting to compare this representation of the Evil One with the Western conceptions of the same subject. It will be remarked that the Japanese have not allowed themselves to be left behind in the matter of the physical ugliness which they give to the Wicked One. They give him claws everywhere, right up to the knees, and even in the middle of the leg.

Plate CAF. The iris is a favourite plant with the Japanese. The elegance of its lanciform leaves, the chaste and graceful droop of its petals, supply material for numberless studies and decorative designs. Though we have in Europe certain varieties which grow on comparatively dry soil, we never find the Japanese iris represented otherwise than on damp ground. It springs up on marshy land, and little zigzag bridges are built, whither noblemen and ladies of rank betake themselves in splendid gala robes to get a nearer view of all the delicate white and purple hues of the flower.

Plate BBD is a closer study of flowers with the details more worked out, of a more anatomical character than that of which we have just spoken. It is easy to see that the artist who made these sketches wished to steep both hand and eye in all the subtle lacework, in every tiny curl of the petals, in all the graceful curves of the delicate stems. On the left we have an oleander, on the right a poppy.

Plate AGD represents a piece of brocaded silk of the seventeenth century. The design is composed of a trellis of dull gold on which dark green leaves stand out.

Plate BBH. A kettle in wrought-iron dating from the beginning of this century. The shape is modelled on that of a lotus leaf covering the body of the vessel. Even for objects of the most ordinary use the Japanese always take their shapes from Nature, a fact which cannot be too often repeated. At the same time, they delight in employing a substance the working of which offers in itself a great difficulty to be overcome. Iron, so difficult to work, has always been held in great esteem by them, and the perfection which they have attained in dealing with this metal is well known.

Plate BEI is a perfume burner of Iwami pottery; the paste is brown and covered with an enamel of the same colour but of a somewhat darker shade. This piece represents the legendary tortoise with a long tail, which we find so frequently employed as the symbol of longevity. The Japanese really seem to have believed in its existence. The origin of this appendage must probably be attributed to the fact that the shell of old tortoises becomes covered with grassy filaments which the creature drags behind it. This one carries on its back a Buddhist Saint, a sennin, with his eyes raised in ecstasy towards the vault of heaven. The under side of the tortoise bears the signature Nagami Iwao. This piece may date from the end of the seventeenth century.

In Plate BDG we have collected together several little ornamental designs. In the middle is a medallion formed of two fish counterposed, and around we have birds flying in the rain, storks rising out of the reeds, little designs representing personages with their heads covered with enormous masks, bats amid branches, geometrical patterns, rabbits among bamboo shoots.

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SEPARATE PLATES.

CAB. The Snow Landscape. By Utamaro.

BHH. Iron Kettle.

CAA. Lovers. By Harunobu.

BDG. Small Ornamental Designs.

CBJ. Three Scenes. By Hokusai.

CAF. Iris.

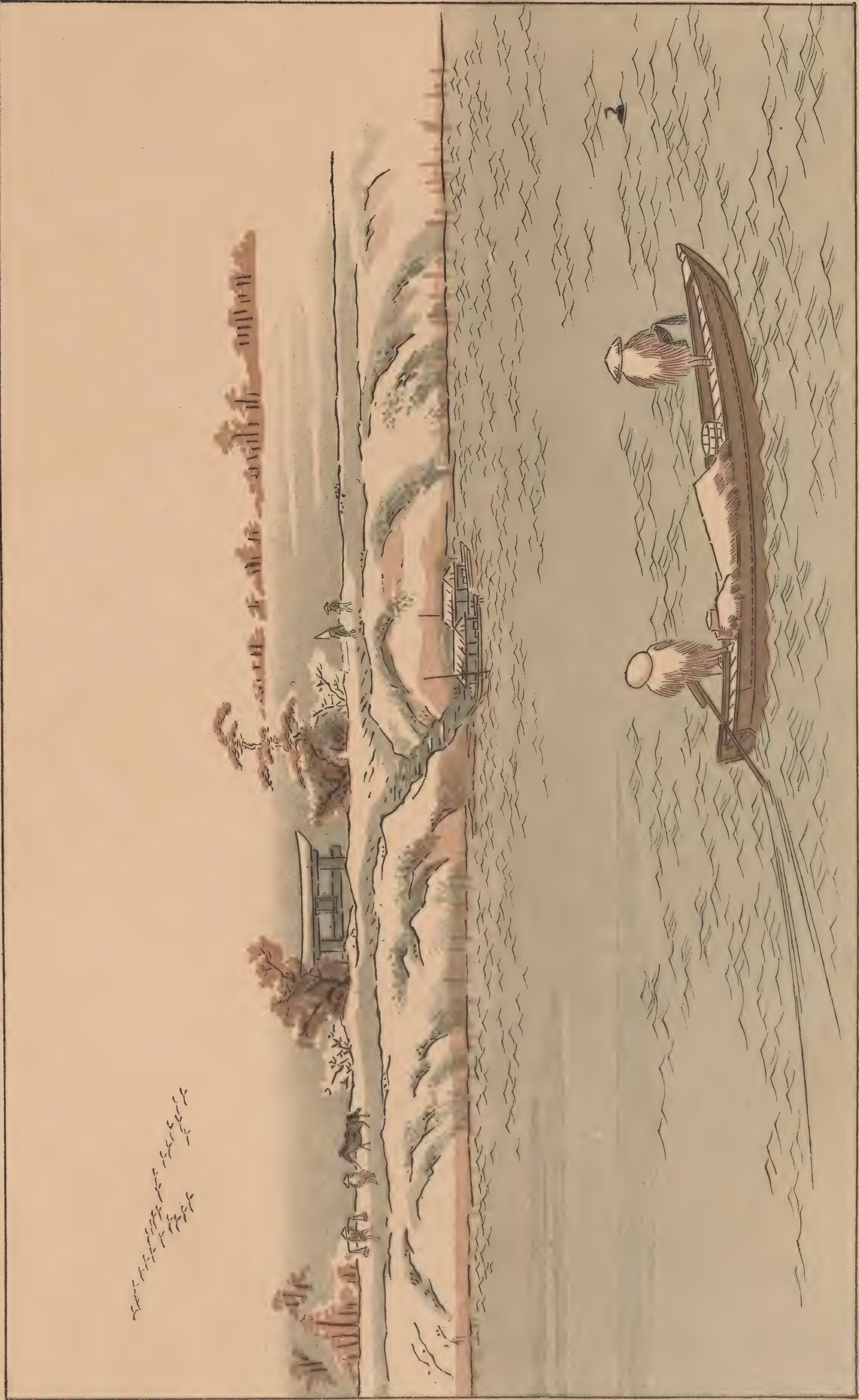
CBE. Temptation of Buddha. By Hokusai.

AGD. Seventeenth Century Stuff.

BBD. Study of Flowers.

BEI. Perfume-Burner—Ceramic Ware.

*Number XXXIII. will contain the conclusion of M. Gustave Geffroy's article on
"Japanese Landscape Painters."*



BHH





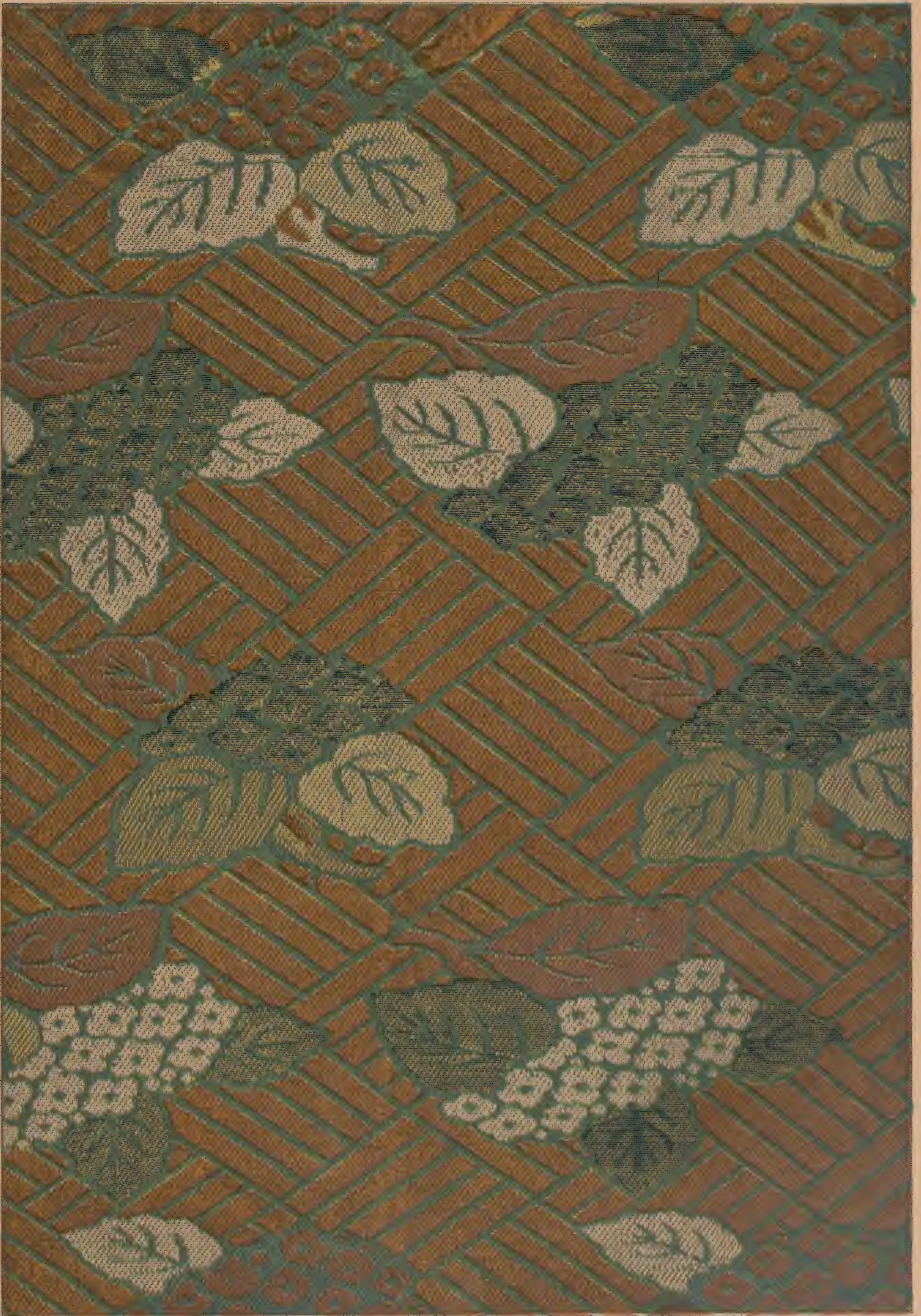
鈴木春信画















The page is framed by a decorative border. At the top, there are two butterflies: a small one on the left and a larger, more detailed one on the right. On the left side, there are two more butterflies, one above the other. On the right side, there is a butterfly below the top one, and a plant with two buds. At the bottom, there is a dense arrangement of various plants, including what looks like clover and other leafy vegetation.

JAPANESE LANDSCAPE PAINTERS.

II.

The same love for the things of this earth, a talent for appreciating the fleeting and constantly-renewed joys of nature, a bent for finding a peculiar pleasure in every change of season,—such are the instinctive feelings which we find in the artist as in the Japanese who loves his little garden, and seeks in it solace and food for reverie. The same concise means, an unerring choice of the characteristic features, the power of rapidly striking the key note,—



The rice-fields, by Hokusai.

such is the similarity of technique which we find both in the writers and the painters, poets of the same kind. Doubtless, the poets who deal with words can more easily express the depth and the shade of a feeling, and the poets who have to do with lines and forms are better equipped for setting forth the material aspect of things. Verses only admit the phenomena and aspects of landscapes in the shape of ingenious metaphors to set some emotion in relief, while the works of the landscape painters only allow their ways of feeling to be seen through individual constructions and harmonies.

It would be impossible to name here the painters and draughtsmen whose landscapes we know. To do so would be to write an enormous list of names, a dictionary of individuals, a catalogue of works. Suffice it, to point out this perpetual tendency of the best artists, to sum up Nature in broad lines, in decisive lights. They express the highest pitch of sensation, they subordinate all the details to the line which represents them, to the light which pervades them, to the shadow which enfolds them. They know how to give magnitude to the tiny space in which they inscribe their visions, and on this sheet of paper suddenly heightened or widened, they show with the smallest possible number of strokes, the interval between the foreground and the distant horizon, which is made to recede in the most prodigious manner. Often there is nothing, or next to nothing, in this wide interval; but the two distant appearances are in such exact relation to each other that everything is revealed. It is atmosphere that fills the gaps and gives this extraordinary illusion of distance to the spectator. To represent what is going on in this atmosphere such is the principal object, the prime cause of the work of art. In spite of all the comparisons which can be made—and many of them indeed arise from a similarity of results—the



Rustic bridge, by Hokusai.

works of the landscape painters of Japan and of the masters of the Impressionist School of our own day have not the same starting point. The great French artists to whom I allude express light by modelling surfaces, whereas the Japanese admit only line and the aid of some washes to produce the sensation of distance and the illusion of light.

This tendency shows itself from the earliest beginnings known to us of Japanese Art, and it is visible in all the different manners indulged in by artists of classic or poetic tastes whose works have come down to us. The genius of the Far East finds an incarnation in a new race, the æsthetic inheritance of China passes to the tiny nation of Nippon, which receives the heirloom with due respect, as a collection of historic traditions and religious precepts. The landscape painters obey the common law. Their attention never strays to familiar paths, to sweet rivers, to the luminous ocean, to the mountain seen from every point of view. No; the landscapes which they show us are the landscapes of Japan transported into some other artistic latitudes. We are inclined to think that the early Japanese painters were acquainted chiefly with the later works of the Chinese Schools, a conventional art which was the last outcome of probable masterpieces full of originality and power, the dying gasp of a sumptuous and refined past, jealously guarded as a cast secret, a national mystery. Some Japanese artists may have travelled in China and learnt partially the chronology of this tradition, but the poetical ideal of a civilisation cannot be begun over again, and the Japanese, so highly endowed with instinct, while still following in the footsteps of the Chinese artists, already began to foreshow individuality of research and a striving after fresh discoveries.

In the works of the Japanese artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, directly inspired as they were by the hieratic bent of their

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neighbours on the Asiatic continent, in the productions of Sesshiu and his School, of Keishoki, of Doan, and of Schiubun, a contemporary of Sesshiu even more strictly imitative in his art, we already discover traces of an individual way of looking at nature, of freedom in the use of the brush. There exist works of Sesshiu's distinguished by deep blackness of ink, by the violence of the strokes, through which we get a glimpse of a mountain road, of water dashing against trees and rocks, and here already we find the blotch, and the diffusion of that blotch by the most simple means, showing a curious searching after Nature and a love for atmospheric effects. Keishoki gives the true impression of a mass of mist floating like a lake of vapour in mid-air between two mountain-tops. Another, an anonymous artist, piles up the snow, silhouettes the skeleton of a tree, and makes a horseman wander over this mute winter waste. In these artists, and in the Kanos, whose works mark a phase in the artistic evolution, a reaction against the purely aristocratic nationalism of the Tosa School, Chinese teaching was singularly productive. If the works with which these painters were acquainted showed signs of obstinacy and decrepitude, they were none the less capable of recognising the grandeur of the summary drawing, the manner of giving size to the subject by employing expressive lines and blotches. This is the starting point of the art of the Japanese landscape painters, and for three centuries the genius of their race continues to be in harmony with their first declarations. Over and above the difference between one individual and another, there is a general characteristic which particularly strikes our eyes and mind, and perhaps all the drawing of all the draughtsmen of Japan is summed up in the fact that the lines by which they represent objects never reproduce anything more than the essential part. A promontory jutting out, the bank of a river, a silhouette of mountains, afford occasion for the eye to wander over immense landscapes. In all the representatives of this Kano dynasty, which springs into being in the sixteenth century, passes through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and survives to our own day, there is, to begin with, before any preoccupation about detail, the desire to represent a geological and atmospheric condition, the weight of metal, the fluid nature of air, the force of an element. They show us the plain, the cliff, the mountain, the river, the

lake, the sea, rain, snow, mist, wind,
sunshine,—earth, water, light.

In all of them we find this





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pre-occupation to sum up and to give grandeur to their subject,—in Motonobu,* who fills the air with luminous beams and gives a glimpse of mountains; in Tanyu, who paints low bluish hills; in Naonobu, in Yassunobu, who

unfold endless perspectives on the narrow strip of a makiyémono, rapid landscapes, bird's-eye panoramas, rising moons whose silvery splendour gleams in soft waves below the level rice-fields, mountain tops which emerge and rise one above another. Tsunénobu expresses a density of atmosphere, a low sky, a soil on which all sounds are deadened, a cold and silent phase of nature, by depicting a long-legged bird, standing on one leg, in the snow mist. Guéami,† who belongs to a school parallel with that of the Kanos, inscribes the four seasons on one sheet of paper, beginning with the tree blossoming in spring-time to end with the peak frozen by eternal winter in the mountain regions. A gentle dreamer, Soami, son of Guéami, paints the house-tops and the tips of branches peeping through thin mists, piles up pagodas in the fog, and makes a stream suddenly leap from a mountain gully. I name these artists here without any order, quite at haphazard, as if I were walking through a museum. Here is the never-to-be-forgotten Korin, the unique master, who avails himself of the tiniest scrap to produce a whole.

From the end of the seventeenth century, when Moronobu laid the foundation of the popular art, the artists who took upon themselves to set forth the manners and customs of their country, and to show with exactitude the spots where these scenes took place, did not on that account give up the grand lines of landscape, the poetry of far-spreading spaces. They no longer possess the sentiment of landscape in the abstract, so to say, as did their predecessors, and we must come down to Hokusai to find the realization of familiar truth allied with generalizations of Nature; they sometimes amuse themselves with pretty child's play, and limit themselves to the dryness of technique. But they tell the story of their country day by day, and despite these differences, they still keep a feeling for fair sights and

* See No. 14, Plate AGB.

† See No. 20, Plate AGA.



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a tendency to eloquent summaries. Before their works one can pass long hours of reverie and dimly guess at distant perspectives, adding to the districts which the artists traverse imaginary countries. The human figure, be it noted, plays an important part in their compositions, and some of these artists have realised it in such a typical and grandiose manner that their share is thus sufficient, and it would be unfair to ask of them that pantheistic genius which is the lot of a privileged few. Is it not enough that the artists of the Outagawa family should have been the chroniclers who make



The beach, by Hokusai.

all the public life of Japan move amid its accustomed landscapes,—night fêtes by Toyoharu, delicate architecture and clever pictures of crowds by Toyohiro, illustrations of the stage and scenes of everyday life by Toyokuni, ladies out walking by Kunisada, sumptuous and melodramatic compositions by Kuniyoshi, in which the landscapes assume the appearance of a transformation scene in a pantomime? There are some brilliant and very individual prints in the work of Kuniyoshi, the last of the group, a contemporary of Hokusai, from whom he draws his inspiration. Graven in our memory are the monster in the clouds, the huge fish surrounded by men in boats, mountains girt with clouds, great fires by the water-side, Fujiyama seen through a fisherman's net, a rainbow, the harmonious bend of the Gulf of

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Yeddo, the boat with the great black bird on its prow, brilliant harmonies of red and green trees, yellow roads, blue skies, and that waste land, those rocks, this hamlet buried in snow by the shore of a sea, blue, limpid, and cruel, and the priest Nitshiren alone in the cold and the silence making his way through the snow which rises up to his waist.

Kiyonaga and Utamaro, the poets of woman, who know her daily life, her occupations in the house, her walks, her graces, her elegance, her love affairs; know also what kind of nature she looks at, through which streets



Winter landscape, by Hokusai.

she passes, on the banks of what rivers she lingers with sinuous gait. Look at the charming landscape by Kiyonaga,* in the print of two ladies in a boat, and in the work of Utamaro,† the greatest of all in portraying woman; look at the illuminated bridges, the dark skies, the pale moonbeams, the twinkling stars, the spring trees blossoming white and pink, the snow sprinkling the dainty gardens.

All, we repeat, are not named, and biographies of individuals with enumerations and descriptions of their works seem necessary if we wish to know the history of Japanese Art. A chapter ought to be consecrated to Massayoshi, who has drawn landscapes in the same way

* See No. 7, Plate III.

† See No. 8, Plate IH, and No. 12, Plate AAI.



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that great pencil draughtsmen take jottings of physiognomies. In the same way, a place would have to be given to the realistic painters of the Shijo School (founded by Okio at the end of the eighteenth century), who loved morning mists, tree tops, amethystine mountains. Here, where our task is limited to passing the landscape painters of Japan rapidly in review, we have only two more names on the roll-call, those of Hiroshigé and Hokusai. For myself, I must say that I do not place these two artists on the same line, and I see an enormous difference of conception and talent between the one and the other. But they represent well, in the last day of Japanese Art, the two directions which we can seize and follow in a mass of paintings, drawings, and prints. Hiroshigé is a man of great talent, very anxious to be exact, paying great attention to the form of things, and even succeeding in feeling himself and making others feel lofty sensations. There is a prow of a ship by him, in a vignette about two inches wide, which suggests the movement of the waves; there is a cataract which forms the subject of a huge composition in which the eddies and whirlpools of the nether waters are undeniably masterly; there are others too, certainly, and he gives a very high opinion of his talent in the rapid studies of his sketches. He excels in treating near objects, but he is somewhat coarse in his distances. It is possible that he has suffered in the process of engraving, which has made the lines heavy and loaded the colour. Finally, the impression which he leaves on the mind is that of an artistic image maker, admirably gifted, destined to immense popularity, sowing broadcast all the innumerable products, truthful and amusing, of a brilliant and flexible art.

Hokusai is a poet of a very different calibre. Unrivalled as a painter of manners and customs, he shows a personal philosophy in treatment of human nature, and unites a certain good-humoured satire in his representations of man with the most audacious flights beyond the horizons, at the same time, to confine ourselves to the technical means employed, he is a harmonious colourist and a forcible and refined draughtsman. He is a realist in this sense that he paints scrupulously the landscapes which he has seen, effects which he has noted as they passed, but he always goes further, higher, and he never wearies of affirming the essence



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of things, the force of phenomena. His waves swell, rise, fall, and make one think of the whole ocean, of all the rhythm of the universe. Everywhere in the views of Fujiyama, in the *Man-gwa*, he knows the smallest details and marks out the spaces. He is the most attentive observer, the scientific exponent; he carefully measures his objects, decomposes the slightest movements, and he is at the same time one of the boldest travellers who has ever journeyed into dreamland. He paints scenery which cannot be moved, changeless rocks, eternal mountains,—he enumerates all their changing aspects under the influence of lights and shadows. He possesses in the highest degree the Japanese talent for rendering the movement of beings and things; he makes men gesticulate, animals walk, birds fly, reptiles creep, fish swim; he makes the leaves on his trees, the waters of his rivers and seas, the clouds in his skies all move. He quits at will the commonplace of life to soar on the wing of a chimera, turns nature to his own account, creates monsters, tells the tales of startling dreams. He is the truly extraordinary landscape painter; he sets forth the seasons from flowery spring to black winter, draws up a map of the fields, orchards, and woods, traces the course of meandering rivers, makes the sea swell in foam like muslin and in waves all claws; he casts the breaker over the rock, twists it into languid volutes on the sand; and again, when the panorama of the world he lives in is no longer enough for him, the eye of his imagination returns to former epochs or foresees future cataclysms—he gives the world a shake and invents chaos.

GUSTAVE GEFFROY.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate BEA is a print by Utamaro. In a bit of landscape buried under the snow, a young lady is on the point of stepping into a little boat, of which we just see the prow and a corner of the covering which is to protect the fair traveller against the winter cold. Her head wrapped in an ample black snood, her figure tightly clad in a long dark mantle which covers the rosy tones of her robe, cautiously picking her steps with bare feet, which high wooden pattens or *guéta* keep from touching the snow. With one hand she holds up her dress, with the other she seeks for support from her companion, a servant no doubt, to judge from his common clothes. The artist has amused himself by contrasting against the spotless white snow the greys, pinks, and pale blues, giving strength to this sweetness by the bold note of the two touches of black.

Plate CAC is taken from a work by Toyokuni, entitled *Customs of the Day*, which was published in Yeddo in 1802. We have already taken from it Plate CAD of No. 31, "The Rice-Harvest"; each of those two volumes ends with one of these two plates, the second by the rice-harvest and the first by the composition which we now have before us. On the bank of the river Sumida, rolling its pure waters through the capital, a young woman stands upright on the prow of a boat and gazes dreamily as she contemplates the night. If we make allowance for the artifice—quite admissible to the mind of a Japanese—by which the artist lights up his foreground despite the darkness of the hour, we must recognise how ably Toyokuni has made the most in this print of the masses of black.

The kind of parapet in the immediate foreground, and the robe, printed in a strong full black, throw back into the distance the depths of the landscape and the clouds which darken the sky. And in this supple silhouette, in this head gently raised, what a refined indication of the reverie of the personage, what an enticing suggestiveness for the poetic mind of a Japanese, always ready to be touched by the beauties of Nature!

Plates CAI, CBA are taken from the *Tenkin Oraï*, a work in three volumes illustrated by Hokusai, from which we have already taken the subject of a plate in a previous number. The series of scenes which pass before us in these volumes are most instructive; we find in it all the occupations of Japanese life, rapidly caught from Nature by the powerful vision of the master, and rendered with straightforward simplicity. In Plate CAI we have, first, a road passing between a rice-field and the pebbly bed of a stream which turns a mill-wheel. Men laden with burdens pass, while a peasant with his pick by his side takes a rest, and another moves away with his spade over his shoulder. There we see a pilgrim, carrying a lantern, who stops and casts a reverential look at the stone image of Buddha placed at the turn of the road; then, two gardeners are busily occupied, one in mending a palisade, the other in pruning a pine-tree.

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Plate CBA shows us an umbrella-maker, a woman dressing, caught in a supple movement, and under a shower a daimio's retinue with his standard-bearers, baggage, and beasts of burden.

Lastly, in Plate CAH, a portion of an analogous retinue in which coolies, two-sworded noblemen and their followers with the flag-staffs march in military step.

The other composition represents the gathering of the *kaki*, the most delicious of the fruits of Japan, with a flavour of the orange and the apricot. Finally, the last scene shows us, hurrying along under a shower of rain such as is unknown in our latitudes, a woman with her child on her back, while her companion shelters her by holding over her a lotus leaf of fabulous size.

In Plate AAG are figured two birds, the snipe and Miquelon's duck (*harelda glacialis*), each in their natural surroundings, indicated by three strokes of the brush, the marsh, which is represented by two water plants, and the waters of a cold country, figured by some waves and a snow-covered tree-trunk.

Plates CBF and CBH are taken from two works by Kitao Keisai Massayoshi, both executed with a determined intention to carry simplification of drawing to the farthest limit, leaving in each subject treated only the stroke which indicates the essential part of the form, or the movement which betrays the character. The crow becomes a mere black blot, the bird of prey a flattened head and wings whose powerful folds lap over each other; the parrot becomes only a curve with a crest, the swallow an arrow shooting along, the pheasant a swelling breast and a long tail; it is the minimum of an indication in every case, but so clear, so legible, so striking, and at the same time savoured by a grain of humour so amusing, that in turning over the five or six volumes which Massayoshi has consecrated to these kinds of sketches, one cannot help being carried away by their gaiety.

In the same way, in Plate CBH, with what an admirably natural movement the woman arranges the folds of her dress and the other opens her umbrella. As to the two little scenes where the back of a chair is represented by three strokes, we must observe that they represent Chinese personages: the flute held by a man and woman refers to a love legend, and the kind of chess-board which we see on the other side is also of Chinese origin; it is the game of *go*, more complicated than our draughts. The Japanese give themselves up to it with an enthusiasm which affords endless material to their caricaturists; we often see two players at *go* so absorbed in the game that thieves carry off the contents of the house under their noses without their noticing anything.

Plate CBI reproduces a print by Kuniyoshi. It is the dramatic story of a double suicide, the result of disappointed love. This romantic story has remained famous in Japan under the title of *Shin-ju*. Two young people fell in love, and on their parents refusing to consent to their marriage, threw themselves off a bridge into the Sumida, their two bodies bound by the same cords. Thus we see that the drama of love belongs to all countries.

Plate CD contains three decorative designs, the first formed of a sprinkling of tiny leaves; the second, of cherry-blossoms on a dotted ground; and the third, of a trellis along which run wave-lines carrying with them half-open fans.

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CBF.	Birds.	} Rapid drawings by Kitao Keisai Massayoshi.
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CBA.	Three Scenes—An Umbrella Maker ; A Woman Dressing ; A Daimio's Retinue	By Hokusai.
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*Number XXXIV. will contain an article by Mr. A. Lasenby Liberty, on the
"Industrial Arts in Japan."*







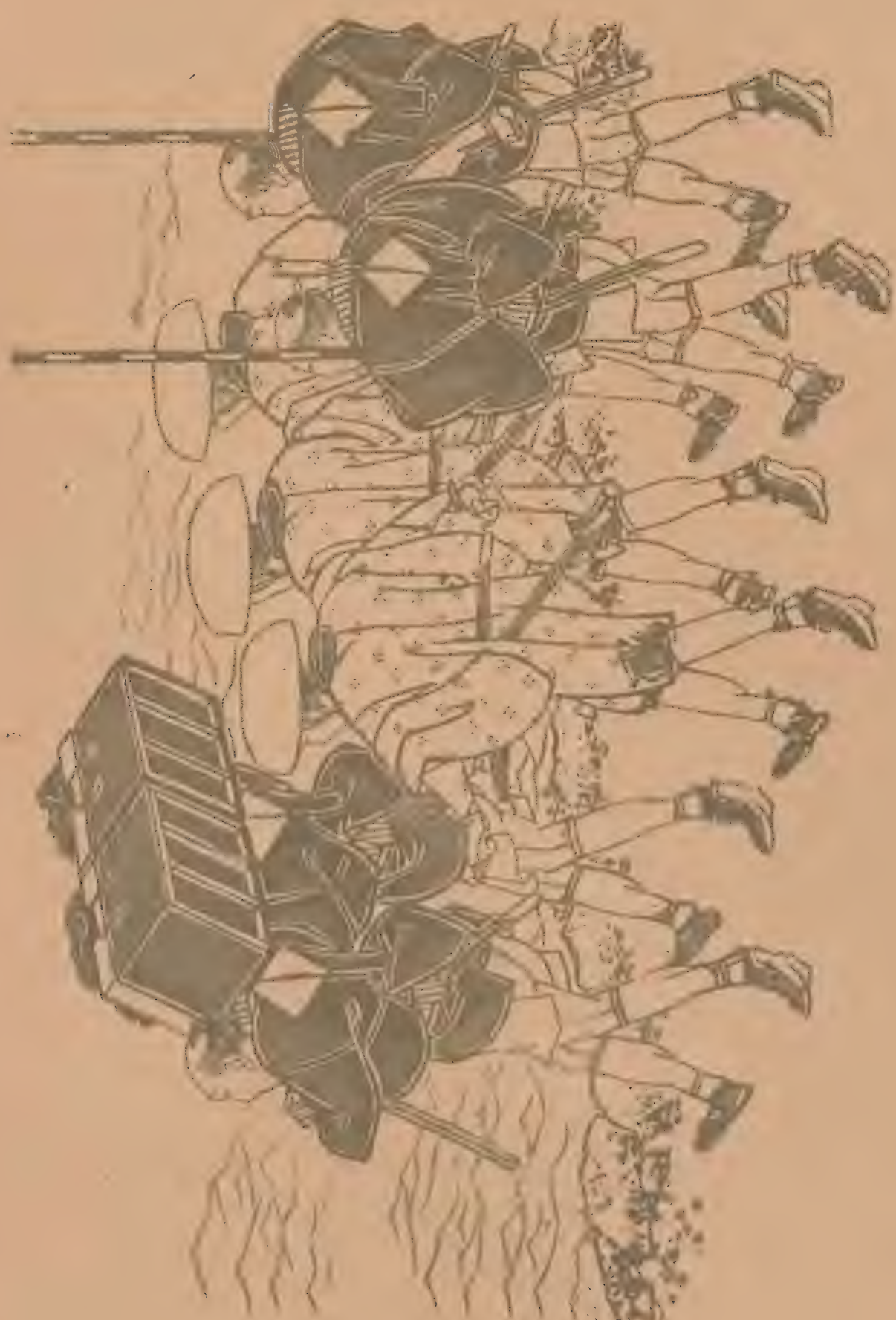








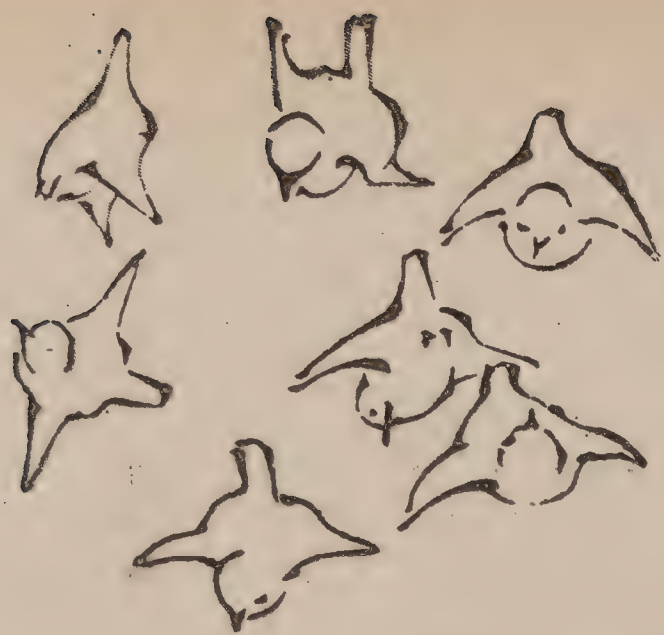






THE
INDUSTRIAL ARTS
AND
MANUFACTURES
OF
JAPAN.

During my three months' stay in Japan, observation convinced me that there is little to add to our technical knowledge of the Japanese industrial art which has not already been exhaustively detailed by eminent and well-known authorities long resident in the country. Therefore, in this paper I propose to deal broadly with my subject, and to consider the race-genius of the people in con-



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nection with their industrial arts, to note how it influenced the past, and to try to form an opinion as to the extent it will affect the future.

Ethnological.—The Japanese are a distinctive and characteristic people—vigorous, tenacious, intelligent, and emotional.

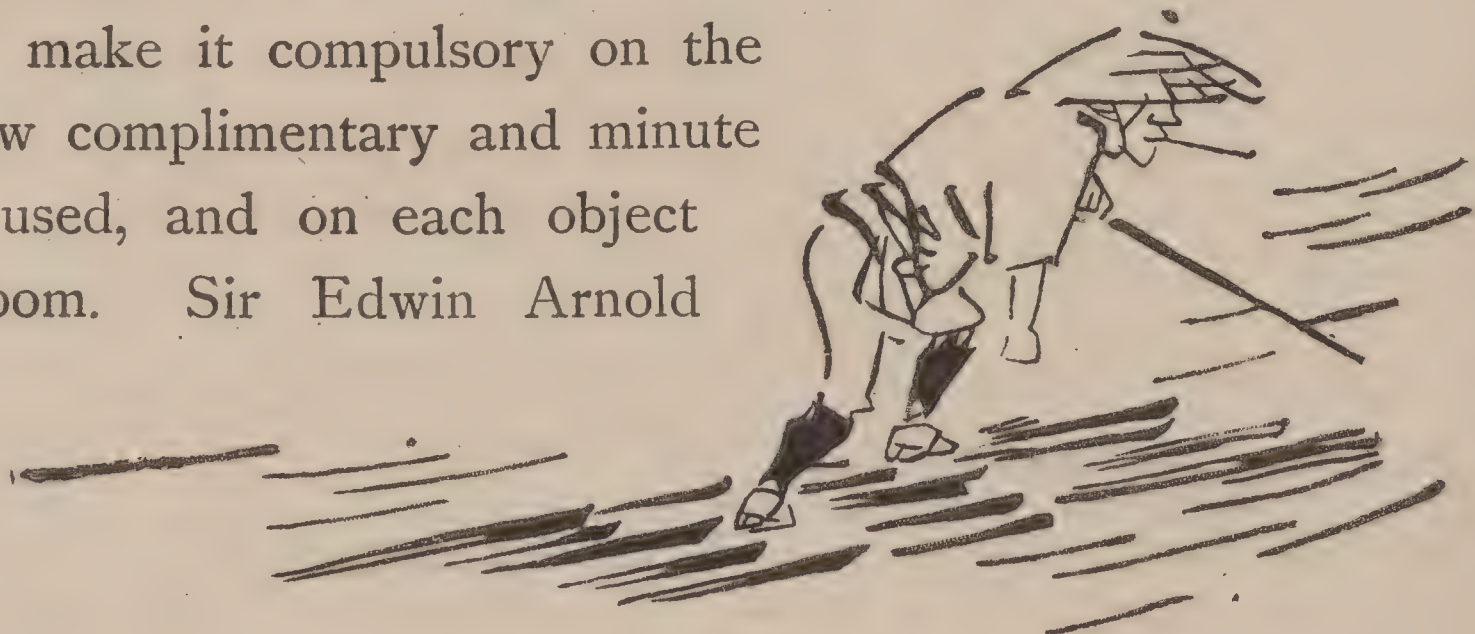
(a.) The race has developed a simple, poetic, and euphonious language, known as the Yamoto, which, though amalgamated with, has survived the ordeal of being brought into contact with the much older and more complex language of China, compared to which it is more elastic and capable.

(b.) The race has evolved a high form of natural religion, known as “Shinto”—“the way of the gods”—which teaches simplicity, courtesy in social life, and careful attention to the least detail in life’s surroundings. Shinto teaches the fundamental tenets of true politeness, in that it inculcates reverence to parents as one of the highest virtues, and the family circle fosters the germs of the great national trait of ceremonious politeness. There



is no oath or offensive word with which to express dissatisfaction in the Japanese vocabulary, save recent acquisitions supplied by Western civilisation at the Treaty Ports. Deference to age is universal with the young; and it is considered a privilege as well as an evidence of filial duty, to study the wants and wishes of

the parents even before the necessities of the progeny of those who may have households of their own. “Keep this mirror—my picture—and thy destiny will endure as long as heaven and earth,” were the injunctions delivered to Jimmu-Tenno, the first Mikado, the first head of the Shinto faith, and the Shinto faith has survived both the introduction of Buddhism in the third century, and Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century; Buddhism adapting itself and amalgamating itself with the indigenous cult; Roman Catholicism being obliterated and swept away. The national social “Tea Ceremony,” known as the “Tsha-no-yu,” which specially cultivates hospitality, courtesy, purity, and tranquillity, comes of Shinto origin, and largely influenced the applied arts, as the rigid ceremonious rules of the “Tsha-no-yu” make it compulsory on the part of every guest to bestow complimentary and minute inspection on each utensil used, and on each object and surrounding in the room. Sir Edwin Arnold attributes this influence on



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the arts to Buddhism, because a Buddhist priest, one "San-no-Rikin reformed, extended, and gave the institution a dignity it had not before possessed ;" but the institution was extant, or it could not have been reformed, and to ascribe the æsthetic progress of the nation to the influence of Buddhism on such grounds is surely to mix cause with effect. The architecture of the domestic buildings and the Miyas, or temples, bears witness to the Shinto spirit of simplicity and careful thoroughness, and the hearts of the people are yet imbued with the spirit of their religion. I myself saw cables, wherewith to raise the timbers of a temple in course of reconstruction made of thick masses of human hair contributed by Japanese maids and matrons, who had voluntarily parted with their raven locks for this purpose. All the materials used for the building were gifts, the labour voluntary, and no paid craftsman engaged.

(c.) The race has produced an administrative Government, which, with varying fortunes, has existed during twenty-five centuries. The head of this Government, the present Emperor, who ceased to be known as the Mikado in 1868, ruling by right of an uninterrupted succession extending over the whole of that period. This unique dynastic continuity is surely suggestive.

Physical.—Physical causes have played no unimportant part in influencing the direction of the applied arts. The one I would especially emphasize is the liability of the islands forming the Empire of Japan to frequent seismic disturbance, necessitating the adaptation of the constructive arts to the exigencies of abnormal conditions. Thus not only are the buildings constructed in such a manner as best to resist the unwelcome but inevitable earthquake, but, the domestic buildings particularly, are planned on a most modest scale, as regards height and dimensions, and to this cause must be assigned the general "smallness" of the minor constructive arts. It would, however, be

a grave error to conclude from the size of the domestic art productions that the Japanese are incapable of producing important work when materials serve, and circumstances are favourable. We have proof of this in the colossal sedant figure of Buddha of Kama-Kura, which measures 50 feet high, and weighs about 450 tons, and the bronze Buddha at Nara, through whose nostrils a grown man can pass.



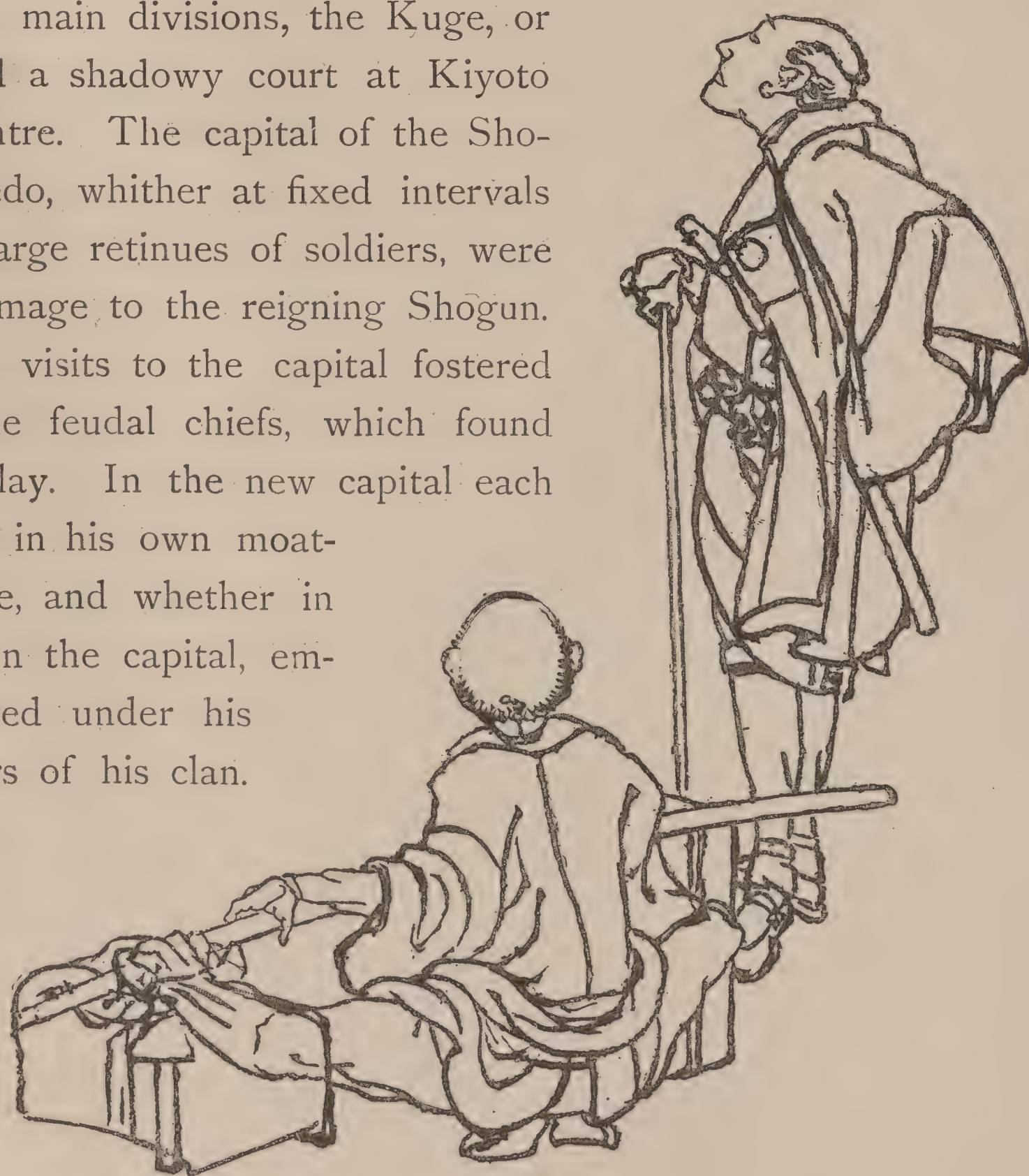
By Keisai Yeisen.



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Historical.—(a.) The earliest historical influence dates from the third century, consequent on the conquest of Corea in A.D. 202 by the Empress-Regent, Jingu-Kogo. Through the medium of Corea, Japan came in contact with the language, laws, literature, and industries of China; was introduced, to its more advanced culture, with Buddhism and the philosophy of Confucius and Mensius as their vehicles.

(b.) The next historical influence in order of importance was the gradual development of feudalism, dating from the beginning of the twelfth century, placing a warrior, the Shogun Yorimoto, in the seat of actual power, and relegating the Mikado to a shadowy half-ecclesiastical headship. Before this period, the Mikado, in time of war, was the leader of the army, and every able-bodied man a soldier; there were no arbitrary class distinctions, and troops were disbanded after the occasion for mobilisation ceased to exist. In the year A.D. 1603, the feudal system and dual Government was perfected by the great Shogun Iyeyasu, and up to the year A.D. 1868 thenceforward the Government of Japan remained a feudal Government. The people were divided into two classes, the civil and military; the former, the Heimin, becoming serfs under vassal princes, lords, and barons; the Daimios, amongst whom the whole country was parcelled out, and the military clan, the Samurai, monopolising the entire field of arts and learning. There were in addition to these two main divisions, the Kuge, or old nobility, clustered around a shadowy court at Kiyoto with the Mikado as their centre. The capital of the Shogunate was transferred to Yedo, whither at fixed intervals the barons, accompanied by large retinues of soldiers, were bound to journey and pay homage to the reigning Shogun. These periodical ceremonious visits to the capital fostered a spirit of rivalry among the feudal chiefs, which found expression in sumptuary display. In the new capital each feudal lord, or Daimio, dwelt in his own moat-surrounded and fortified castle, and whether in his own distant province, or in the capital, employed art-craftsmen who lived under his protection, and were members of his clan. To these servant-craftsmen the Daimios looked for diversified and perfect art works, art



A Pilgrim.



Bonzes playing on the cymbals and on a gong.
Original sketch, by Hokusai.

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such as might excel the possessions of rival Daimios, and in the production labour and time were deemed of no moment. It was under such exceptional circumstances that the feudal craftsmen produced the tsubas, kodzukas, menukies, armour-trappings, fine embroideries, brocades, inros, and lacquer boxes which have charmed and astonished the art critics of the Western world.

(c.) The introduction of Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century, leading up to the expulsion of all foreigners in the seventeenth

century, has had a greater conserving influence on the industrial arts than is

generally realised. The foundation of the Jesuit order, A.D. 1542, coincided exactly with the epoch of the discovery of Japan by the Portuguese traveller Mendez Pinto, a discovery so strange that the truthfulness of his narrative was doubted, and his name, Mendez, was treated as synonymous with mendax = liar. Mendez was followed, in 1549, by the Jesuit father and missionary, Francis Xavier. In 1581, the number of Japanese converts to Roman Catholicism amounted to 150,000, with 200 churches. In 1587 to 200,000, and ultimately to 600,000, or, according to some authorities, to 2,400,000. This wonderful success was destined, however, to be short-lived. Missionaries were now forbidden to preach and reside in the country, prohibitions they ostentatiously disregarded; consequently on the 27th of January, 1614, a proclamation was issued by the Shogun Iyeyasu, which led to a general and sanguinary persecution of the converts, continued until 1677. From the rocks of Papenburg thousands were hurled into the sea; all were doomed to death, and Christianity ruthlessly and absolutely stamped out. In 1624 all foreigners, with the exception of the Dutch and Chinese—and these subject to the most humiliating restrictions—were banished from the country, and an edict promulgated by Iyemidzu, which ordered the destruction of all ships of any considerable size, and limited the building of ships to certain modest

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dimensions, in order to prevent the Japanese henceforward from navigating the open sea, and thus coming in contact with foreign nations. This is a point to emphasize—this voluntary withdrawal of a civilised people from contact with the rest of the world, as it has fostered and nursed individuality in a manner impossible under any other conceivable circumstances. During two and a-half centuries two mighty forces—isolation and feudalism—acted in concert to confine all progress within certain limits. Within these limits there has been steady and continuous development, and so far as art, thought, and productions are concerned, the result has been of the utmost interest and (as yet only dimly realised) benefit to the sister nations of the world.

(d.) The latest historical event, the re-opening of Japan consequent on the arrival of Commodore Parry in the Bay of Yeddo, in 1853, was followed by a rapid absorption of western scientific and mechanical ideas and influences. Perhaps no period could have been more unfortunate for Japanese art, as it coincided with the western climax of art retrogression, and, the Japanese being an emotional people, for a while failed to discriminate between material and art advantages. But I believe the indigenous vitality of the race-genius is amending this error, and, as heretofore, will re-adapt the arts to fitly accord with altered circumstances; and this conclusion I will now endeavour to support by a survey of some of the more important industrial arts and manufactures.

Woodwork.—"The Japanese are a nation of carpenters, and with them carpentry is a fine art." So I said and felt a few days after my arrival in Japan, and this impression remains with me. I have not time to speak of woodwork in regard to the major constructive arts, the wooden temples and houses, in which the race-genius for simplicity and thoroughness is most prominent, and can only allude to the minor constructive arts which are equally permeated with the same spirit, however unpretentious and humble their intended use. In cabinet work, the drawers fit so accurately, that it is a pleasure to open and shut them; the little wooden tables, the wooden trays, drinking cups, fans, tobacco-pipes, umbrella frames, bamboo baskets, buckets, ladles, implements of husbandry, etc., are all formed with rigid directness, and are artistic, each after its kind.

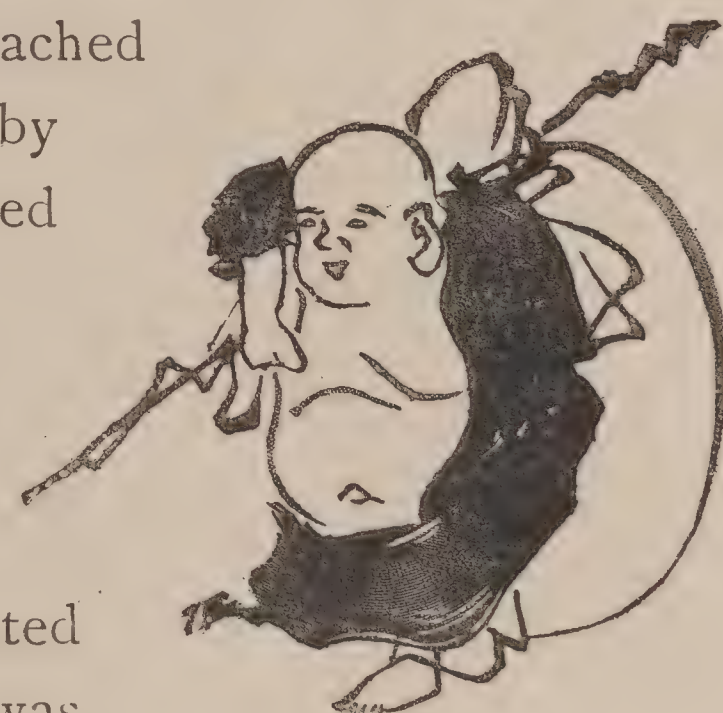




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Pictorial Art.—With the Western nations the fine arts are divorced from the applied and decorative arts, and pictorial art is, technically speaking, out of the province of this paper; and yet I do not see how it can be passed by without some word of comment, as in Japan it is the frequent custom for the artist-craftsman personally to design and manipulate every detail of his work. The pictorial art of Japan has been treated admirably and exhaustively by Dr. Anderson, M. Gonse, and others—whose knowledge is profound, whilst my own is superficial.

The natural art instinct of the Japanese again and again rebelled against the formalism of their court patrons and Chinese tutors, but the nearer Japanese pictorial art approached the formal prototypes, the better it was esteemed by those who, for so many centuries, have conventionalised and fixed the art canons of Japan. For instance, Kiosai, whose death occurred during my stay in Japan, had a distinctly original genius for the portrayal of demonology, and wild imaginative delineations, and some of us are familiar with his illustrated books known as “Sketches while Drinking.” He was a powerful draughtsman of the naturalistic, rapid, and vigorous full-brush-school, his life studies of crows being eminently successful, and yet he was most esteemed by his native patrons for altogether different work; work which was slavishly conventional and unimaginative, and in the old Kuge and Chinese school.



The god Hotei, by Korin.

Copies of the works of celebrated masters are used by the craftsmen engaged in the ceramic, embroidery, lacquer, and metal industries, and in many cases supplemented by natural objects, such as flowers, birds, and feathers.

Lacquer Work.—The art of the lacquer-worker is so intimately associated in our language with the word “Japan,” that it has become synonymous with a specific glossy varnish; and yet the process of japaning, or lacquering, was borrowed from the Chinese. But who can look at an ordinary Japanese lacquer-tray, and compare it with the lacquer productions of the Chinese, without at once seeing that it has practically become a new invention. In Chinese work we have an opaque surface, generally ornamented with rigid, finicking, monotonous detail; in Japanese work we have a translucent surface, combined



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with freedom and spirit in the decorative treatment, and, as a prosaic matter of fact, far greater durability. This is true even with inferior work, which has conformed itself to the requirements of the Western demands.

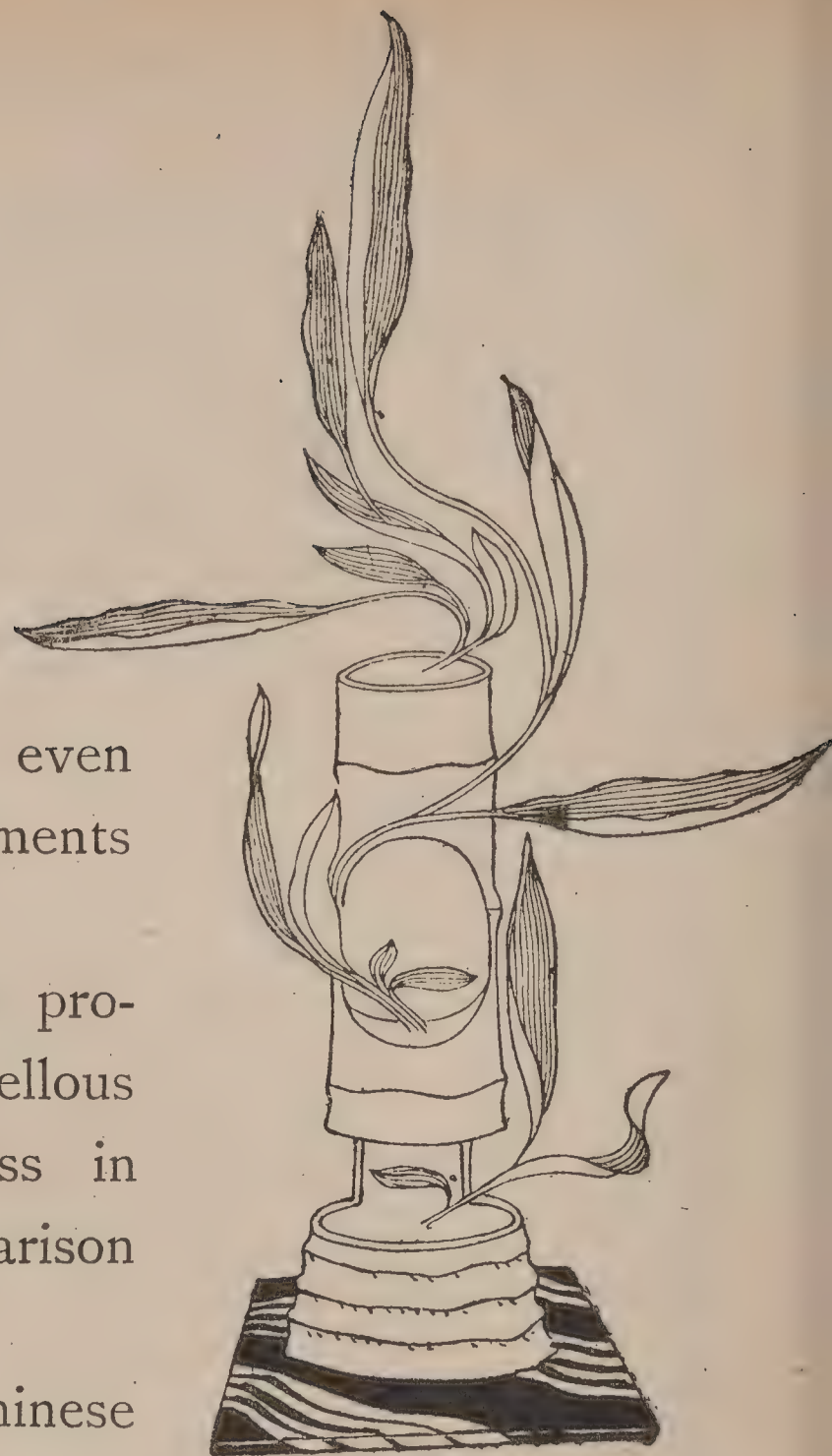
But the higher branch of the lacquerer's art, which has produced the lacquer *de luxe*—an art combining the most marvellous variety in technical combination with incredible thoroughness in manipulative finish—is beyond the possibility of any comparison whatsoever.

Ceramics.—Early Japanese ceramics do not equal early Chinese in brilliancy and translucency of colour, balanced distribution of design, or symmetry and dignity of form. And if we take examples of the old Sung, Yüen, and Ming dynasties, and compare them with old Hizen, Nabashima, Kaga, or Satsuma, this will demonstrate itself. But, as we have

seen, there is an intelligent reason for this divergency; the Japanese handle and caress their little art objects, and seldom display them as permanently fixed decorative ornaments, therefore variety and interesting detail are sought after rather than broad

effect. Thus the Japanese artist wanders with his pencil, just as humour leads him, above or below the surface of the object he is decorating, often placing the most careful work in such a position that, from a western standpoint, it would practically be lost; for he well knows the ceremonious and careful attention his production will secure from his countrymen, and that no quaint fancy, no one touch of his brush will remain unappreciated. The result, in short, is not a slavish reproduction of a foreign idea, but a successful effort to fulfil the requirements of changed circumstances.

As an instance of this, I will refer



Actor followed by his servant, by Shunyei.

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to a visit I paid to a well-known potter in Kyoto, to whom a friend of mine, some twelve months previously, had entrusted one of the familiar Dresden "Nodding Mandarins," coupled with a request that this figure should be reproduced with Japanese characteristics. Apology after apology had been offered for delay, but on this occasion the artist-potter was able to show, in an unfinished state, an array of some dozen unglazed figures, the result of his experiment, each with the typical moving head and tongue of the original, but each a separate study of Japanese male or female character, and each showing individual humour and intelligence. This is the spirit in which the best masters of the present day carry out their work, but to secure work of this order one must perforce await the artist's



Scene on the stage, by Shunyei. (Theatrical Encyclopedia.)

leisure and inspiration. It is interesting to know that the more wealthy among the Japanese themselves secure the larger proportion of these higher class productions. The inferior and familiar modern ceramic wares exported in such abundance from Japan are of course regulated by the commercial law of supply and demand, and too often show a retrograde tendency.

Enamels.—In the art of *cloisonné* enamelling on copper, the Chinese attained a decorative excellence unequalled by any other nation, and the Japanese modified the art to accord with their own specific requirements, paid more regard to detail, and introduced a more sombre key of colouring. These modifications resulted in a loss of general decorative effect, but were again more in harmony with the Japanese habit of close inspection.

(a.) *Metal Work.*—Bronze working in Japan is a pre-historic art, bronze

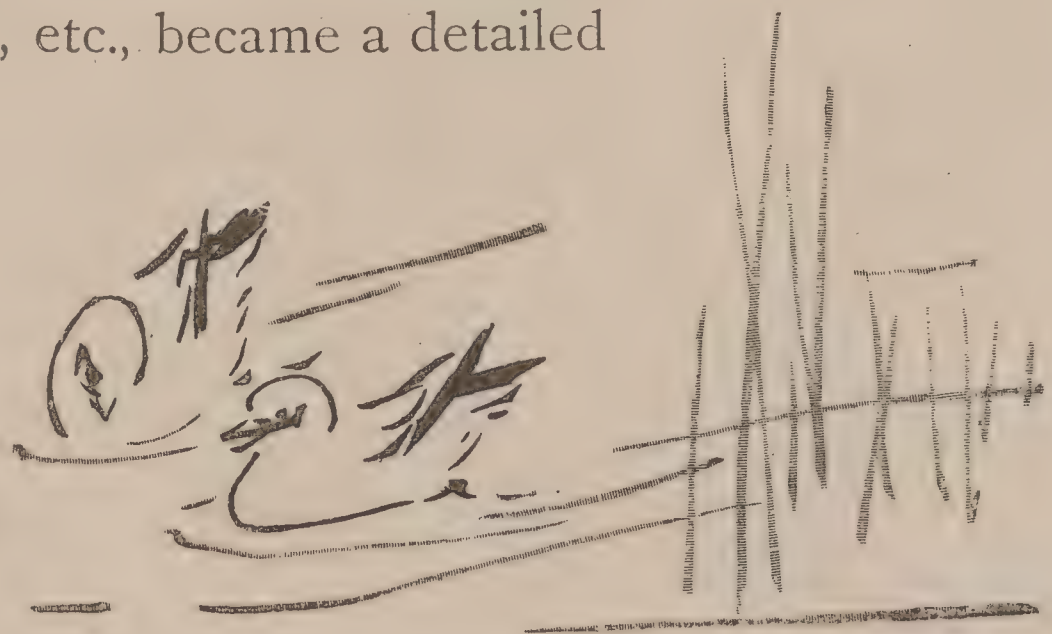


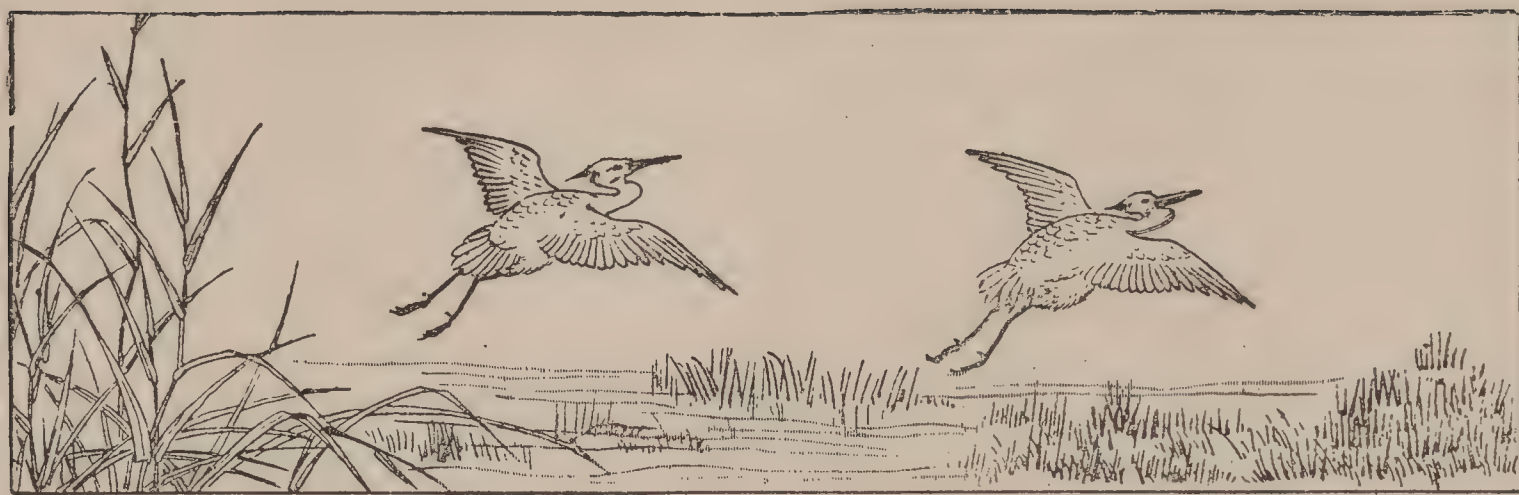
bells and arrow-heads being discovered concerning whose origin and age nothing is known. About the eighth century many colossal bronze figures, bells, candelabra, and incense burners were produced, designed after Chinese models for the requirements of the exotic cult of Buddhism, and no marked alteration or further progress appears to have been made in this art up to the middle of the last century, when a retrograde taste developed, also of Chinese origin, for high relief, and overgrown and overloaded ornament.

Immediately prior to European intercourse, a complete revolution took place in the bronze industry, introducing a skilful arrangement of varied metal colouring, and a better sense of due balance in ornament. In this latter school, which is absolutely indigenous, high relief does not play so prominent a part, whilst inlaying and incrustation are artistically combined with chasing and engraving. The metallic combinations—inlaying and amalgams for colour effect in modern bronzes—form an interesting and separate study.

(b.) *The Sword*.—After the eighth century followed the era of feudalism, in which the turbulent rivalry of the barons caused the sword and armour trappings to take first rank in esteem, and the less useful bronze industry to be neglected. The art of welding steel was carried to consummate perfection, and sword blades made by such men as the Myo-chins obtained, and justly obtained, a reputation equal to the old Persian. The metal sword hilts, or *tsubas*, were treated in the utmost imaginable variety of methods consistent with utility, beauty of ornament, and the material employed.

Menkis, after the manner of the *tsubas*, were developed and elaborated into the most charming and varied exemplifications of the skill of the metal-worker. In fact, every portion of the sword and its belongings, the knife (*kodzuka*), the hair-pin (*ko-gai*), etc., became a detailed work of art without losing an iota of usefulness, and the Japanese sword and its fittings is in itself a type of the original, practical, and artistic





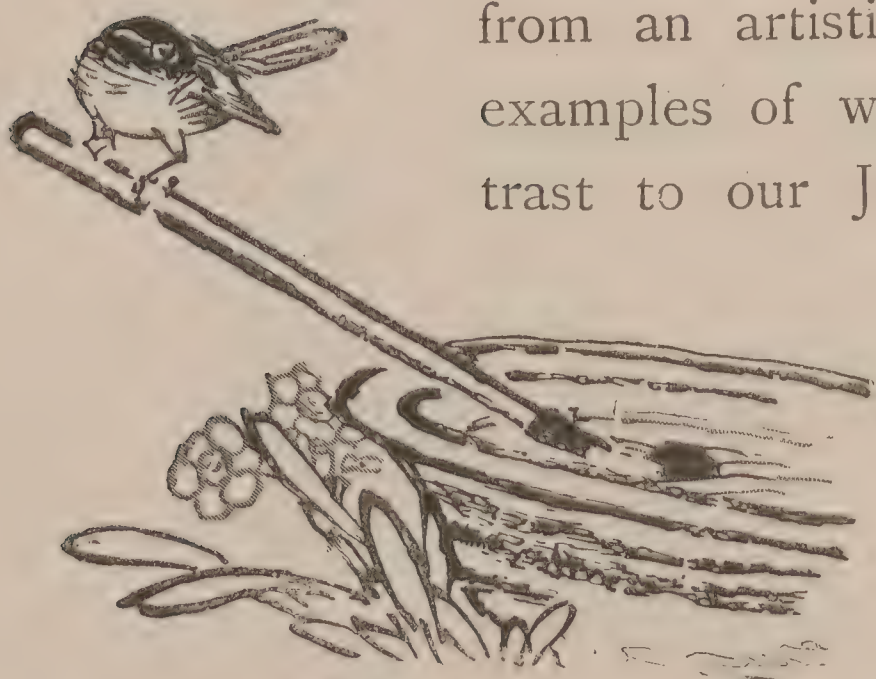
genius of the nation. Western military innovations having now supplemented the sword by the breechloader, the artist-craftsmen who erewhile decorated the sword and its trappings now readily utilise their skill in other branches of the metal-worker's art.

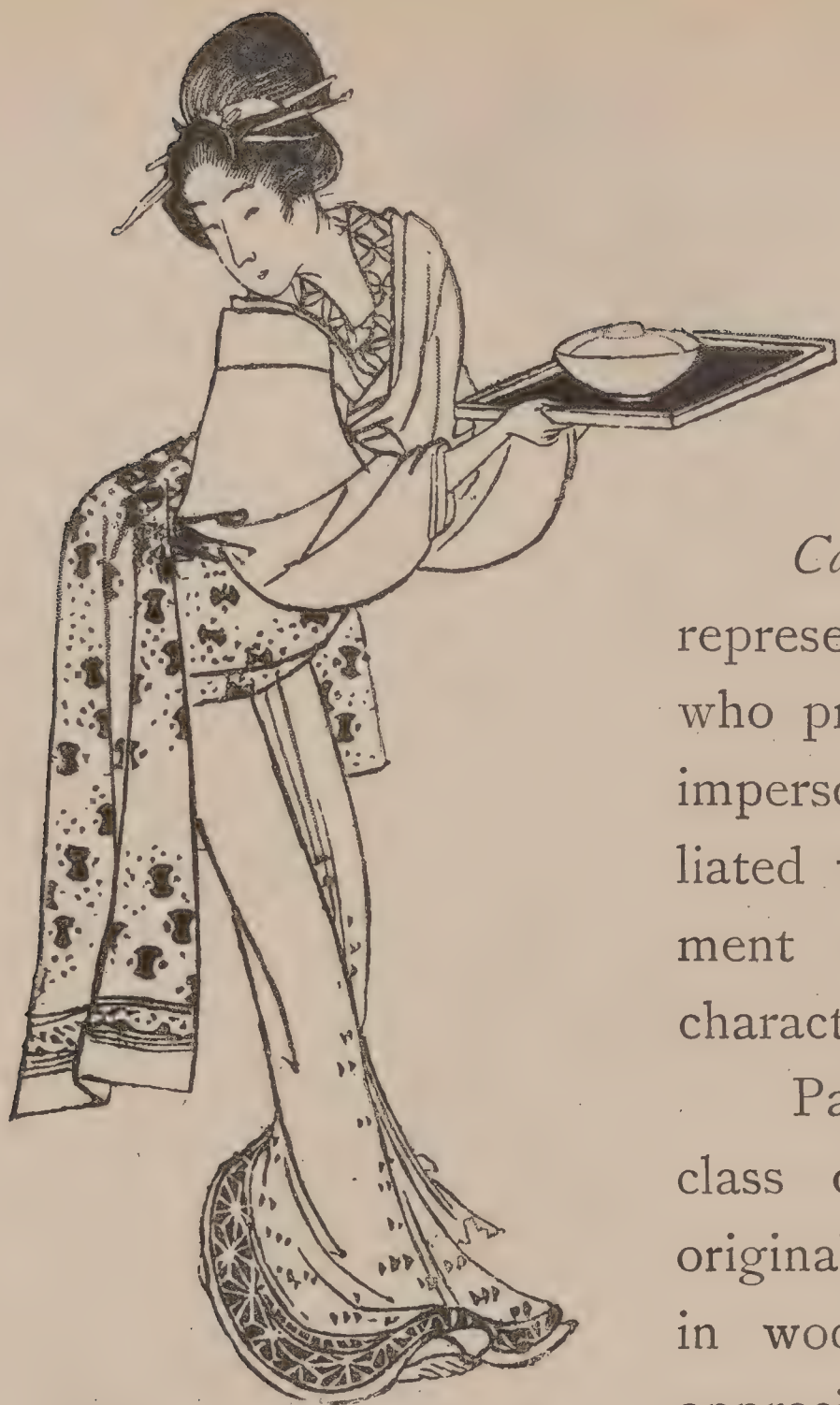
(c.) *Iron*.—Most interesting developments in cast and wrought iron-work are now produced in Tokyo and Kyoto, and an infinite variation shown in design, the inlaying of gold, silver, copper, and other metals. The Zogan-works in cast iron are coated with a steel-blue or dead-black ground work, a peculiar kind of "Nielo," which is made of lacquer putty, or Shakudo. Among the most eminent living exponents of this craft are Komi, Iyeneri, and Ikokusa, and I consider the modern circular metal salver by the latter artist, which I have the pleasure to exhibit, shows breadth and force in combination, with microscopic detail, far beyond the skill of any metal-craftsman outside Japan.

The variety and beauty of Japanese iron nail heads would supply matter for a paper by itself.

(d.) *Copper* does not lend itself well to casting, but is adapted for working up into wire and sheet forms. The Japanese fully recognise this, and utilise this property by engraving copper, and forming with it decorated mounts for boxes, cabinets, etc. The *yuwa-kasni*, or native kettle for boiling water, is an example in which the hammer marks are left on the comparative soft metal as an assistance in the decoration of the ground work: an idea happily adopted by Messrs. Tiffany, of New York, in the manufacture of silver goods.

(e.) *Gold and Silver*.—In the precious metals an instructive illustration, from an artistic point of view, is the present coinage of Japan, examples of which I venture to submit, without comment, in contrast to our Jubilee coins. Formerly the Japanese attached little value to any metal, precious or base, other than what it would produce from the art point of view, and many of their most precious heirlooms are of no intrinsic value.





Taken from the *Ogura* of Hokusai.

ARTISTIC JAPAN.

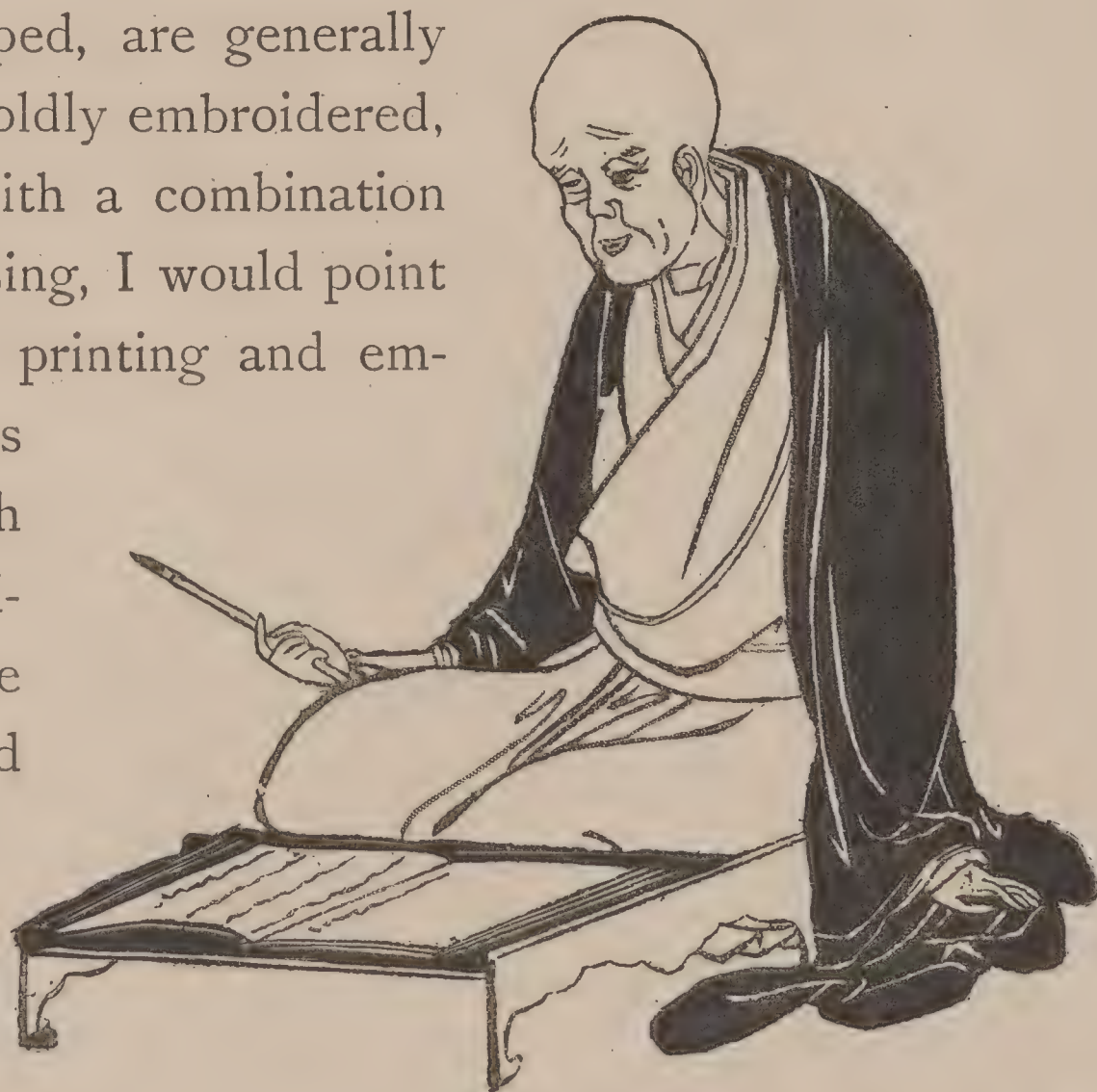
Carving.—The major glyptic art was for centuries represented in Japan by the wood-carver, the Moku-butzu, who produced life-sized and colossal figures of the various impersonations of Buddha, and the saints and heroes affiliated with the Buddhistic cult. The monotonous treatment was prescribed by formal rule, and Hindu in character.

Passing to the minor glyptic works, we find in the class of carvings known as Netsukies, an absolutely original and indigenous art. These Netsukies, in ivory, in wood, in bone, and other materials, are so much appreciated and so well known to Western collectors, the schools and principal carvers so duly chronicled and attested, that I need here do no more than allude to them.

The immediate modern successor to the Netsukie—the Okimono—is made entirely for the Western market, and is for the most part too complex and ambitious, retaining little, if anything, of the freedom, life, and humour, the simplicity and directness of the true Netsukie.

Textile Manufactures.—The most characteristic Japanese textile productions during the feudal era were silken brocades and plain stiff silken material adapted for male and female costumes.

In contrast to the thick and stiff ceremonial silks, are the silken robes ordinarily worn by the women and children, fulfilling as they do all the requirements of a classic standard of good taste. These supple silken fabrics, both plain and craped, are generally all of one plain and quiet colour, others boldly embroidered, some printed with colour designs, some with a combination of both printing and embroidery. In passing, I would point out how skilfully, in the combination of printing and embroidering, the Japanese secure an effect as of the entire surface being covered with rich embroidery by their method of substituting printed tones and colours for the ground work, and merely touching up and emphasising certain minor portions of the design with the needlework. The result is a great saving of labour, and a hint for our own manufacturers.



Taken from the *Nihon Neibutsu* of Hokusai

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There can be no reasonable doubt that the Japanese silk industries will in the near future greatly influence the European. Manufacturers are conforming to European requirements, the area appropriated to sericulture and the cultivation of the mulberry is being rapidly extended, the native hand-loom is being supplemented by power-loom and the latest scientific mechanical appliances of the West. The material is a home production, the workmen are industrious and deft, the cost of labour is far below the European scale, and the expense of ocean transit for an article occupying so small a bulk as manufactured silk is merely nominal. Lyons and Milan will soon have no insignificant rival in the Japanese market.

Conclusion.—In conclusion, I claim that the race-genius of the Japanese has preserved its individuality, known how to benefit by contact with older and seemingly more powerful foreign influences, absorbed what was useful in those influences, and evolved from them new and progressive developments, moulding even the powerful cult of Buddhism and the teaching of the Chinese sages to its own form and special requirements.

I claim that this race-genius has admirably conformed itself to the peculiar physical conditions of land and climate; to historical events which, at one and the same time, fettered in social serfdom, and barred it from all contact with the rest of the world; and that in all varying circumstances, subject only to temporary aberrations natural to an emotional people, it has maintained its essential vitality.

A. LASENBY LIBERTY.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate CDJ represents a statuette in carved wood about sixteen inches high; the dress is covered with a thin coating of dark green paint, much worn by time, the head and hands are the natural colour of the wood, which has acquired with age a fine dark brown, almost black, tone.

We pointed out in a former number (No. XXIX. p. 379) that Japanese sculpture was far from limiting itself to the netsuké of tiny proportions, and that it also dealt with subjects of larger size.

Before the netsuké came into general use—it only dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century—Japanese artists had even conceived, outside of religious sculpture, works of great vigour, of which unfortunately only a few rare specimens have reached Europe. The statuette which we reproduce here belongs to the category of profane sculpture; but the sculptor had not taken an ordinary mortal for his model, and his work perpetuates the features of one of the great figures in the history of Japan. An inscription placed below reads thus in English: "Portrait of his Lordship Hidéyoshi, carved with deep veneration by his vassal Katakiri."

Hidéyoshi, known under the posthumous name of Taïko-sama, was the famous dictator who invaded Corea in 1492. He had under his orders lieutenants, several of whom became celebrated as much for their love of the arts as for their exploits in arms. This Katakiri, who produced this real masterpiece of sculpture, may perhaps have played a brilliant part in the feats of arms accomplished under the great Taïko. It is certainly not the beauty of the model which is here in question; Hidéyoshi was notorious for his ugliness, so much so that the people had nick-named him General Saru or General Ape. But the sculptor, penetrating into the inmost depths of his model, which he could the more easily do as he could often see his chief's forehead wrinkled under the weight of heavy responsibilities, and knew how powerful were the thoughts which animated that uncouth face, has found means to express in the deep-set eyes under eyelids which are however tightly stretched, in the prominent cheek bones, in the imperious, almost haughty mouth, and even in the stiff and somewhat hieratic folds of the robe, an intense energy, the dominant quality of a great captain.

Plate CCE affords a new specimen of profane sculpture. It is the portrait of a nobleman who has retired into a cloister—one sprung from the dust—such is the picturesque Japanese expression—in accordance with a custom followed by a great number of personages who on the approach of old age willingly withdrew from the agitations of a busy life and shaved their heads as a sign that they had retired from the world. In this case the subject is ascetically lean, and his face bears the stamp of a remarkable depth of contemplation. Instead of the piercing glance of Hidéyoshi we see the eye somewhat dim of a man who lives within himself, having renounced all the vanities of this world.

There are traces of white paint on the dress, and the right hand held a fan. This statuette is probably about 250 years old.

Plate CCB and CCJ are taken from a work by Massayoshi, two other pages of which we reproduced in our last number. We find always the same determined simplification, requiring an extremely rapid vision, a particular aptitude for seizing, almost in the twinkling of an eye, the characteristic trait of every object, that which is sufficient by itself, all the others being left out, to convey to the spectator the expression of a complete and synthetic drawing. There is indeed almost an entire theory written in the oval form given by the artist to the mandarine ducks. Does it not seem as if he had wished to show how admirably those aquatic birds are constructed for navigation? In the wild boar the solid snout, the bristling back, the short legs, everything down to the stumpy tail are of an astonishing accuracy if we take into consideration the rapidity of eye required to profit by the rare occasion of a wild boar seen rushing along at full speed.

Again, the pose of the fox and the way he carries his tail are strikingly truthful; so too are the heavy aspect of the bear and the supple movement of the cat washing itself. Finally, the meal in two movements of the fishing bird pushes simplification to an almost comic point by suppressing entirely, while obliging us to guess it, the intermediate movement performed by the bird, viz.: that of tossing its prey up into the air and swallowing it, beginning by the head.

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Plate CCJ is conceived in the same spirit, but consecrated entirely to a band of sparrows, studied in the most varied poses from quiet rest on the bough to a fierce fight, beak and claws.

Plate CDA is taken from the *Tenkin Orai* of Hokusai. It presents three pictures of Japanese occupations. Dyers hard at work are dipping their stuffs or preparing their dyes, while some pieces which have been already withdrawn from the bath of colouring matter hang out to dry. Then we have a painter in his studio decorating under the eyes of two visitors a large panel on which he has just painted a haughty princess in ancient court costume. The painter to whom Hokusai may very possibly have given his own features, holds two brushes in his hand and two little cups, evidently containing two different colours, are placed within his reach. But we must not imagine that he draws two strokes at the same time. It is simply to save himself the trouble of taking up and putting down his brush that he has taken two at once. He works squatting on his heels and draws his lines with outstretched arm, with an astonishing surety of touch, the result of long study and patient exercise.

Lastly, Hokusai invites us to assist at the toilette of three young women, one of whom is piling up the cunning edifice of her head-dress, truly a most complicated operation, and one which is only performed once or twice a week; the other is washing her face and shoulders with an admirably rendered movement of the arm; the third is smearing her teeth with black lacquer in conformity with the custom of the women of Japan who have no more conquests to make once they have found a lord and master.

Plate CCH reproduces on the left a page by Hokusai—the interior of a stuff-shop with bales piled one on the other, while the ladies who have come to buy press forward eagerly, mingling with the salesmen and porters. Everyone is in a hurry, down to the packer who, crouching under the steep staircase, is putting up some precious purchase in a box.

The other half of the plate is by Shôkôsai and represents the interior of a big hall in which a large crowd has assembled to assist at the exciting struggles of the game of Ken.

We can see, however, that the spectators do not neglect to indulge in repasts of a most copious nature, for on each of the squares, which are so many boxes without partitions, is a pile of dishes of fish, of rice bowls, and of saké-cups and basins. The whole mass is full of life and movement, and the young serving-girls who pass through the close ranks of customers are apparently unmoved by the volley of chaff which is directed at them from all sides.

The double plate CAG is a kakémono by Mori Sôsen, one of the greatest animal painters of Japan. Sôsen was more particularly, truth to tell, the painter of monkeys, and one of his kakemonos, which we have reproduced (No. I. Plate D), as well as the cover of our Number XVII., shows how far he had pushed his study of their movements and of their silky fur. Sôsen is said to have lived of his own accord for several years an almost entirely wild life in the depths of the woods in order to be in closer communion with his models. In his long woodland walks he must have observed other animals besides monkeys, and his eye must have been charmed by the gracefulness and suppleness of the deer surprised at the turn of a path with its neck outstretched and its eyes eagerly fixed on the intruder. Exact observation and finished rendering could scarcely be carried to a higher pitch of perfection. The slim, graceful limbs, the dappled skin, the timid pose of the frightened animal ready to spring away out of reach, are all nature itself. Were it necessary to cite another instance to show that this admirable artist was as skilful in treating other animals as in dealing with the monkey tribe, it would be sufficient to mention the picture in the collection of M. Ph. Burty in which a no less decided master touch shows itself in the representation of fish in Chinese ink.

Plate AIE is a double study of lilies so wide open that their petals bend backward.

Plate AED is a decorative design composed of bamboo leaves and mushrooms on a granulated background.

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- CCB. Rapid Jottings. By Kitao Keisai Massayoshi.
- CDA. Various Scenes. By Hokusai.
- CAG. Deer. Kakémono. By Sôsen. (Double Plate.)
- AED. Decorative Design.
- CCH. { A Stuff-shop. By Hokusai.
The Game of Ken. By Shôkôsai.
- AIE. Study of Lilies.
- CCJ. Birds. By Kitao Keisai Massayoshi.
- CCE. Statuette in carved wood.
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Number XXXV. will contain an article by Mr. Marcus B. Huish:

"Advice to Collectors."

CDJ



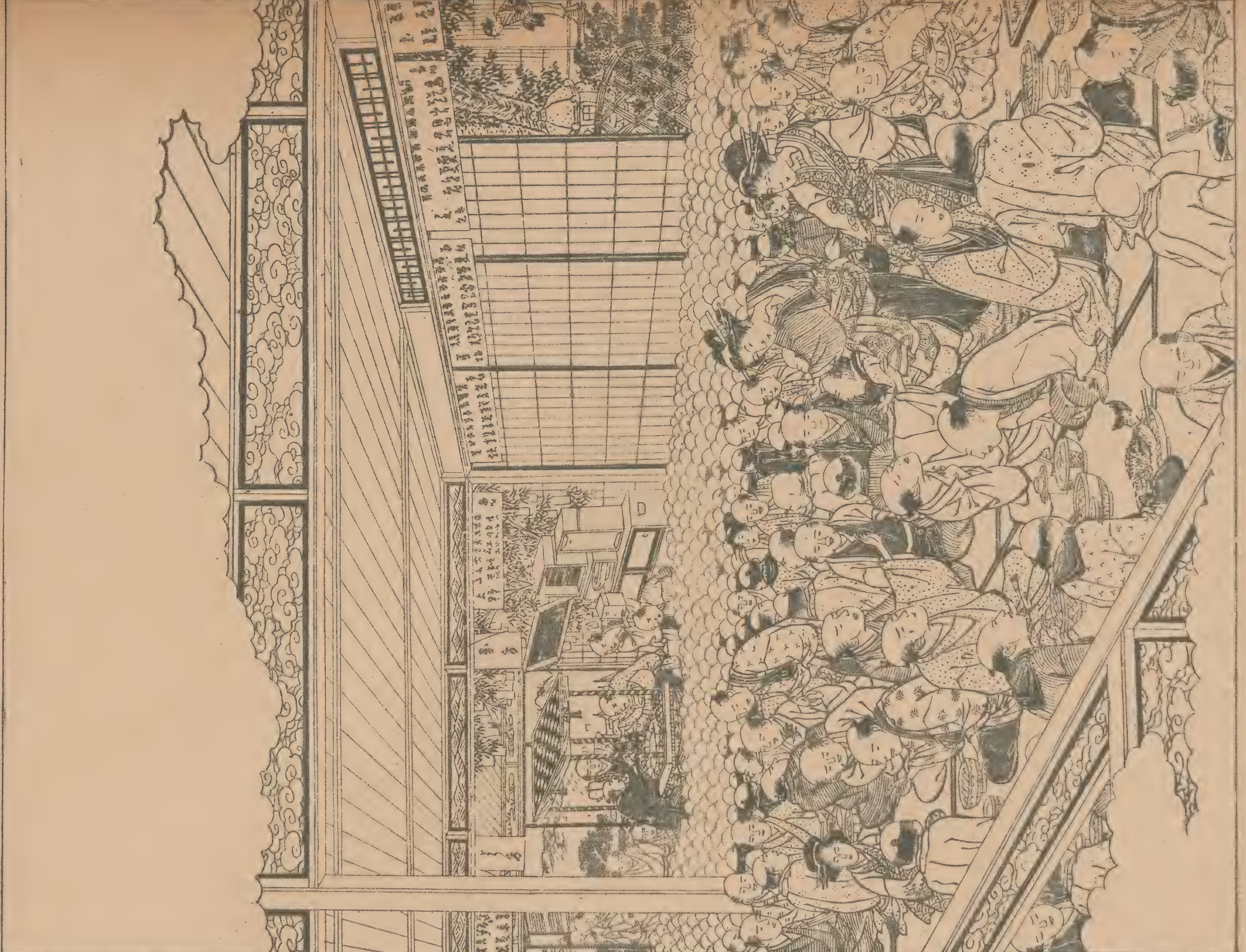
GRAV. IMP. PAR GILLOT.





















Spectators at the Races.

HINTS UPON THE FORMATION OF A COLLECTION OF JAPANESE ART.

Artistic Japan, which all its readers will hear with regret is shortly to complete its issue, cannot have existed in vain. Some portion of the seed which it has scattered broadcast over the world must have fallen on good ground and brought forth good fruit. In addition to those who, previous to its appearance, affected an interest in Japanese Art, and whose interest it has strengthened, there must be many who through its teachings have been led, not only to take up its study seriously, but to become collectors of Japanese wares.

It cannot, therefore, be altogether out of place that one of the closing articles should take as its subject some suggestions and advice to those who come under this last-named category.

I am the more emboldened to offer these because I have myself oftentimes suffered from the want of any source to which when commencing to study and collect I could turn for guidance, and also because I feel that the time has come



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when all classes of Japanese collectors should regard their possessions in a more serious light than they have hitherto done, and that each and all should endeavour to assist in the elucidation of the vast field which still lies unexplored before them.

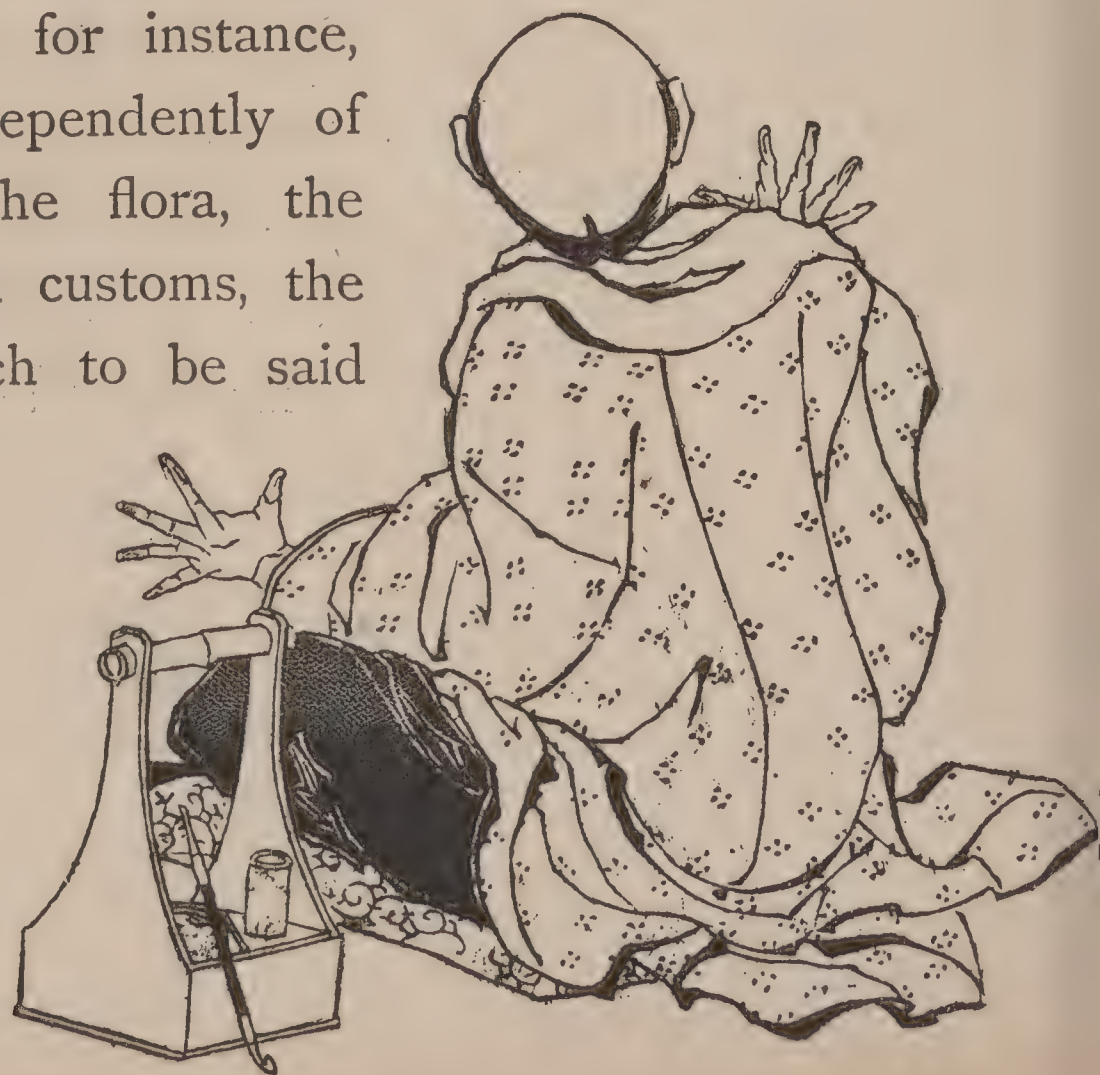
The subject divides itself into the following heads: What to collect; How to collect; How to treat a collection when made.

The question, What to collect? may seem at first sight to carry its answer with it, namely, Anything distinctly Japanese. By no means. If a collection is to have any individuality, any increasing value, any abiding interest for its owner, if he is to become on terms of intimacy with it, and a kinship, as it were, is to exist between himself and each piece of it, it must have strict and abiding limitations which the owner must make up his mind never to depart from.

The first of these limitations is as to the branch or branches of the Art which shall be selected for collection. If there is one thing in Japanese Art which there is no gainsaying, it is its extraordinary variety. To such an extent does this permeate it that if a single branch only be collected, and the collector be endowed with ample means and ample opportunity, he will probably never arrive at a time when he will have to stop for lack of specimens dissimilar to anything that he possesses. If, therefore, he ranges over the varied branches of Art, no house will hold any representative collection of each, and few purses will be deep enough to supply the where-withal to acquire them.

For this reason, if for no other, a choice should be made at the outset and adhered to.

Amongst the varied branches from which a selection may be made we may enumerate pictures (on rolls), engravings (coloured and plain), books, pottery and porcelain, silks and stuffs (including costumes), lacquer, metalwork, carvings in wood, ivory, etc., household wares, or even articles made of particular materials, as for instance, bamboo. Or the collection may be formed independently of the object, as for instance, representations of the flora, the zoology, the religions, the history, the manners and customs, the myths and folklore of the country. There is much to be said





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for this method. Professor Church, for instance, has a quite representative collection of Japanese flora depicted on sword-guards, in that most difficult of mediums, wrought and chiselled iron.

Or, again, the collection may be made according to the occupation or tastes of the collector. As regards this, opinions differ. For instance, one would imagine that the sculptor would be attracted towards the bronzes with their marvellous patina's, or even towards the tiny netsukes; the silk merchant towards old dresses, and the goldsmith towards metalwork. But this is not by any means always or usually the case, and the reason is not far to seek; half the delight of collecting is the relaxation which it affords from the cares and troubles of business, and this can certainly best be done by something which is as entire a diversion from the day's work as possible; this will not be altogether the case if the thing collected is at all akin to the profession of the collector.

But there are other considerations besides these which should influence the choice. And the first is the capacity for storage at one's disposal. A bachelor, especially a confirmed one, may indulge in fragile china, whilst a man with children and careless housemaids may find it necessary to confine himself to substantial bronze. One who lives in a mansion may buy colossal Buddhas, while he who can only spare a corner of his dwelling-room must acquire nothing which will not go into a drawer. But Japanese Art adapts itself to everybody's requirements. A museum is not too large to adequately represent one phase of it; a couple of thousand examples of its finest art may be so stored away in a room that no one need be aware of their presence, as is the case with the writer's collection.

Then, again, there is the consideration of the length of one's purse; a very serious one, for it is astonishing how much money may be invested in a tiny drawer full of objects; and nothing is more disheartening than to find oneself face to face with an object absolutely essential to the completion of a link in one's collection, and no sufficient balance at the bank with which to acquire it. So then it is no use for one who has not a large margin on the right side between income and expenditure to embark upon costly



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From the *Tenkin Oraï*, by Hokusai.

pieces of lacquer, or he may find himself at the end of his tether before he has half-a-dozen pieces ; and, on the other hand, he who is in that enviable position should confine himself to the finest pieces, not only because in the long run they are the best investments, but naturally, the acquirers being limited, they are usually comparatively the cheapest.

There is yet a further matter to which I attach considerable importance, namely, that the collector should not collect one, but two branches, and these should, so far as they fall in with the conditions of space and purse, be as unlike one another as possible. I advise this for more than one reason. First of all I do not think I am singular in feeling that one is apt at times to tire even of one's *bibelots*, even when they are not confined to a single class of objects. I find that, as the year goes on and one gets jaded and fagged with work, a nausea springs up even for the most dearly beloved acquisitions, and that the key is turned upon them when the summer holiday commences without any parting pang. Fortunately in such a case absence makes the heart grow fonder, and one looks forward to seeing them again as for the friend from whom one has been long parted. Not only to mitigate, and possibly to avoid this, is it advisable

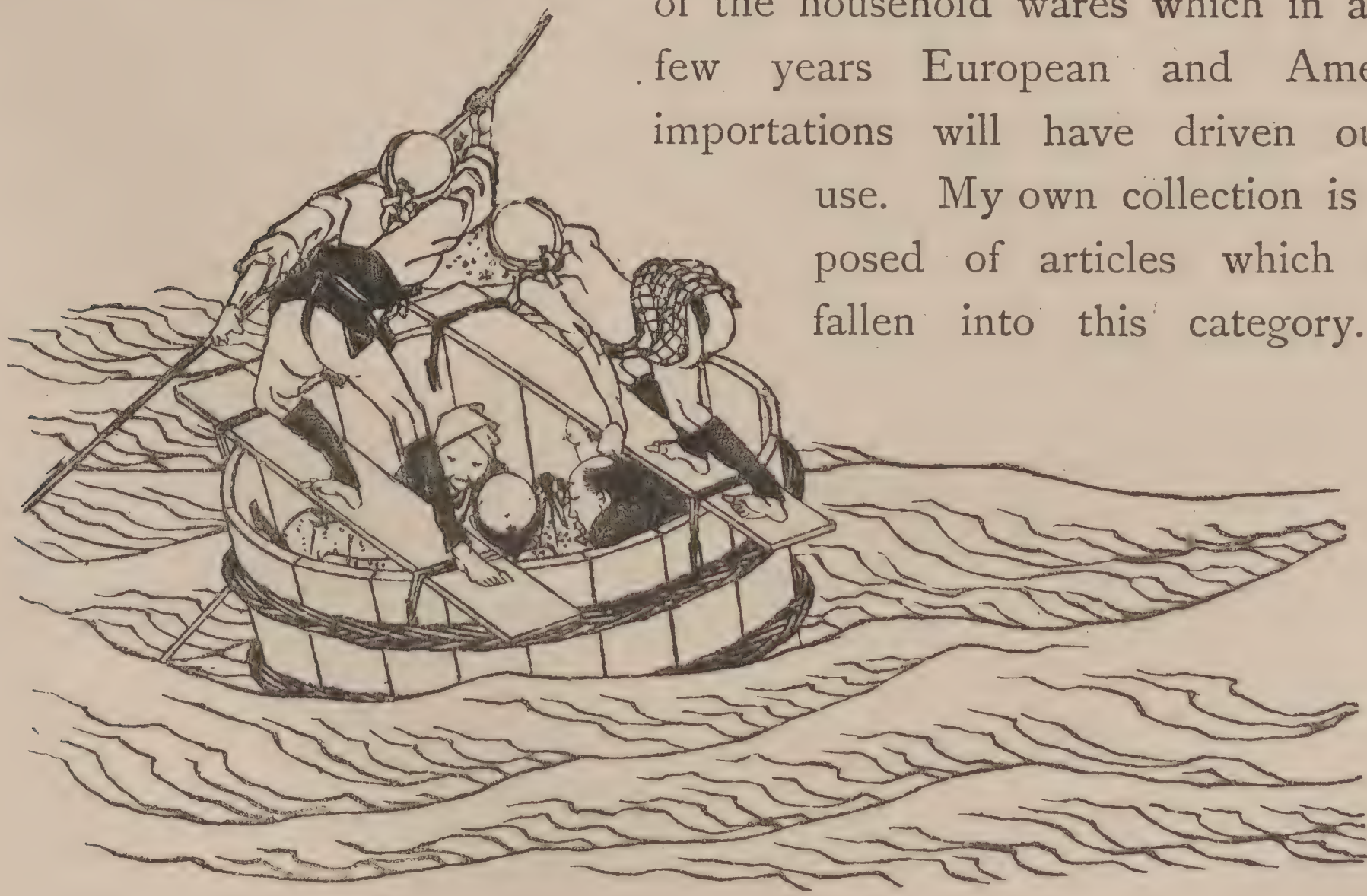
to divide one's attention between two branches, but also because a collection is in this case much more likely to interest outsiders.

This may perhaps be a convenient place for noting a word of warning. All ugly things should be avoided, for nothing will so soon induce a distaste for Japanese Art. Compared with other kindred countries, Japan

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art is remarkably free from monstrosities and hideosities. Instead of, as in Indian and Burmese art, a great portion of it being composed of hideous representations of deities, and demons which have not even grotesqueness to recommend them, it has, apart from its illustrations of religious personages, little that is ugly. Curiously enough up to a certain period, the older the art the freer it is from this, and it is a remarkable fact that just now the Japanese artificer's mind seems to be imbued with an idea that what the foreigner likes is ugliness, and in every way he shapes his wares accordingly. Only a few days ago I came across a quantity of newly-made sword-guards upon which every form of ugliness had been perpetrated.

Most people will prefer to collect objects which have a flavour of antiquity to those of more modern aspect, although in the one case there is a great chance of deception, and in the other none. But there are few modern wares which are now well enough made to be worthy of collection. One class of objects must certainly be avoided, and that is those which have the slightest western influence apparent in either their shape, decoration, or material. But interesting collections might be formed easily and very cheaply of the household wares which in a very few years European and American importations will have driven out of use. My own collection is composed of articles which have fallen into this category. It



From *The Hundred Views of Fujiyama*, by Hokusai.

consists of swords and sword furniture, the use of which has been forbidden by imperial edict; medicine cases, and the beads and netsukes attached to them; writing and perfume cases; pipe cases and the ornaments which adorned them; all of which, if not already disused, are rapidly becoming so.

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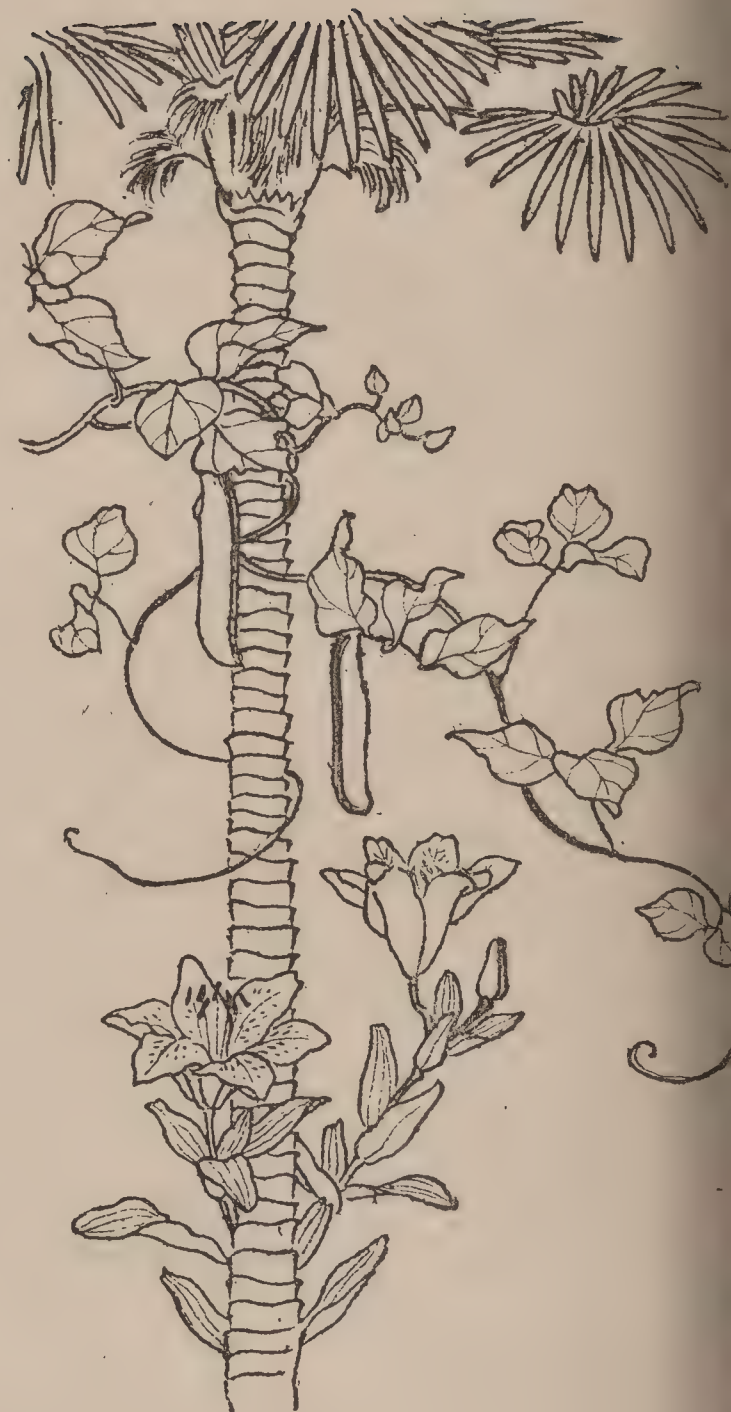
These have three very special attributes, which entitle them to consideration by collectors. In the first place, they have the personality of the owner attaching to them, and which it is not difficult to arrive at when examining them; in the second place, they have for the most part received much consideration at the hands both of their maker and their owner, for they were the only articles of attire (except garments) which could be lavishly decorated; and lastly, they have not as yet been sufficiently collected over here to warrant modern reproductions of them being made. Additional reasons are their compactness; their comparative cheapness; in the case of medicine cases—their illustrating in the finest way every phase of lacquer manufacture; and in that of sword furniture every phase of metalwork; besides this they are exceptionally strong in illustrations of folklore, history, religion, and the flora and zoology of the country.

An advantage of confining oneself to the collection of certain specialities is this, and it is by no means an insignificant

one, especially if the collector does not inhabit the metropolis, that the dealers get to know what he wants and what he does not, with the result that when anything likely to suit comes to them they will buy it with a view to his needs, and he will in this way have as good opportunities, if he be a liberal buyer, that is one not given to haggling and beating down, as if he lived in town.

The second section of my hints, namely—How to collect—may be dealt with more cursorily.

First of all, do not begin without previous study. Time, money, and the accumulation of much which it will be troublesome afterwards to be rid of will then be saved. It is true that opportunities for this study are rather difficult to obtain. Not only the English but the French museums still put off the acquisition of what they will one day have to pay very dearly for, and when they do buy do not always exercise discrimination. To private collectors, therefore, the student



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will have to turn for information, but my own experience of them is that they are not only too ready to show their treasures, but to impart all their knowledge. Reliable text-books on the subject are few and for the most part expensive, two of the best being, for Pictorial Art, Mr. Anderson's work, and for all the decorative arts, except lacquer, Gonse's *L'Art Japonais*. A reliable text-book has still to be written upon lacquer, and in fact upon almost every branch of the industrial arts. Much can be learnt from photographs, and collectors would earn the gratitude of their brethren if they would, as Mr. Gilbertson has done, photograph and circulate impressions of their most noteworthy pieces.

Do not buy too quickly. Know every piece in your collection by careful examination and comparison. This it is impossible to do if you buy a score of pieces every week. Duplicates do not often occur in Japanese Art, but you should know your collection so well as never to commit such an error as to acquire unwittingly two similar objects.

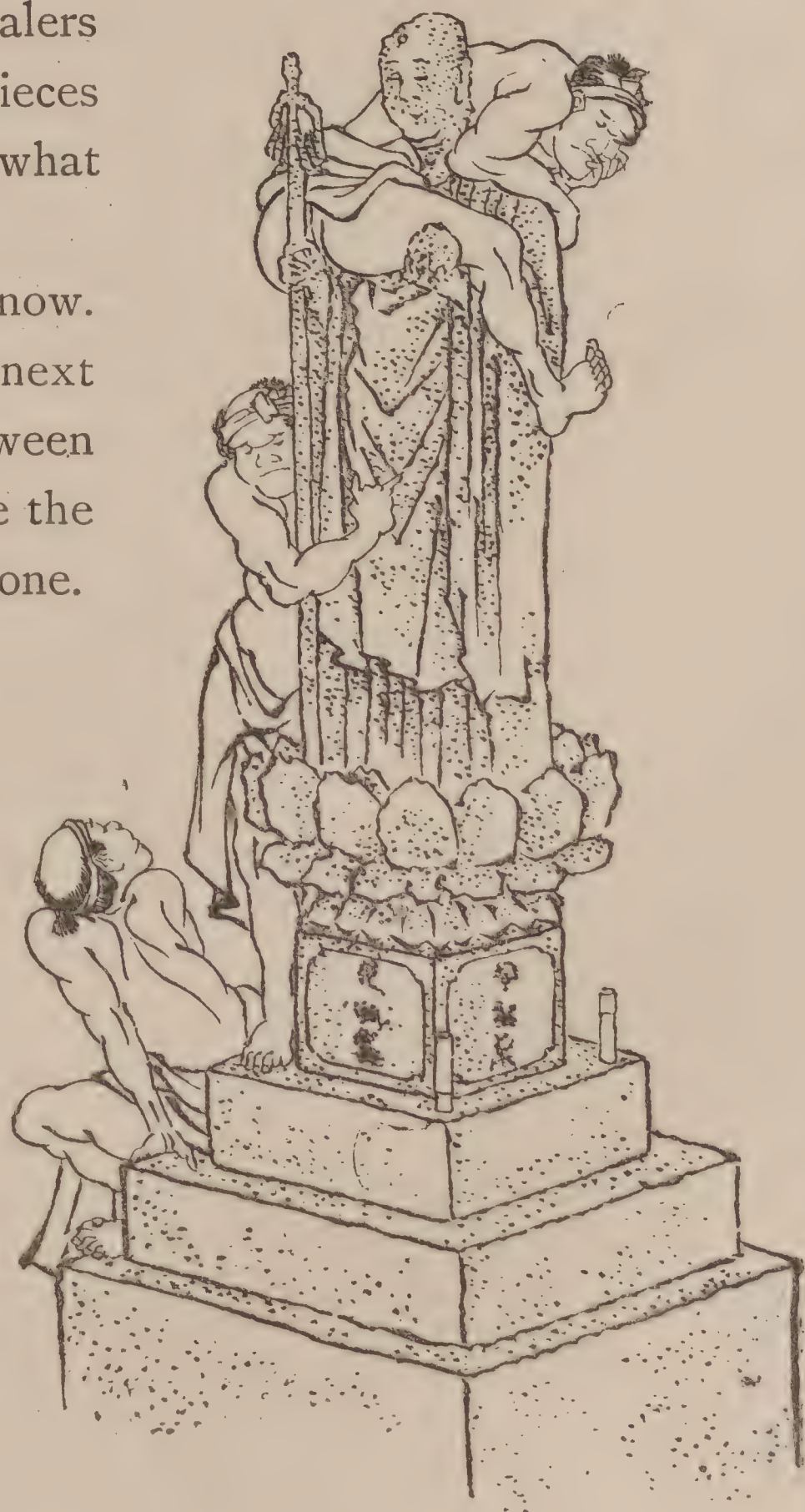
Never buy in lots. It is only natural that dealers should try to avoid being left with the indifferent pieces of a lot, but pay more rather than be saddled with what will only cumber and degrade your collection.

Never beat down the wares with a dealer you know. It not only results in his raising the price of the next article which he offers you, but if it is a question between yourself and another customer as to which shall have the first sight of new things, you will not be the fortunate one.

Have a few things and good rather than many and second-rate, and consequently never hesitate to turn out and sell for anything it will fetch a doubtful piece.

Never lose an opportunity of acquiring a piece which constitutes a missing link in your collection: in Japanese Art so rare is the chance of obtaining a duplicate that in one branch of my collection I have retained two almost similar pieces merely as a curiosity.

Never think it too much trouble to look through what may appear to be rubbish—one not only gains experience, but there is always the



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chance of a find. Few collectors but have had more than one pleasant experience in this way.

And now, lastly, for a few hints as to the collection when started. There are few pieces which do not improve by being carefully cleaned when they get home. Wood-carvings and lacquer should be rubbed with fine cotton wool upon which a little siccative linseed oil has been placed, and afterwards polished with a fine silk handkerchief, great care being taken that there is no dust or grit in either wool or handkerchief. Metalwork, especially if rusty, should be treated by the following process, which has the high authority of Professor Church to recommend it: Dissolve about an inch of stick potash in a quarter of a pint of warm water, then totally immerse the object for about five minutes, after which rinse in hot water until the latter is no longer discoloured by rust or dirt. If the articles should unfortunately have been coated with vaseline or paraffin oil, they must be previously rubbed with oil. When dry the specimens should receive a light coating of siccative linseed oil; after this has been rubbed in with a plate brush, any excess producing a gloss must be removed with a cloth or with pads of carded cotton. Neither shibuichi, shakudo, or incrustations of gold and silver will be harmed by this process.

Metalwork is often defaced by the labels having been affixed with injuriously-compounded gum, containing sulphuric or nitric acid, which has almost removed the delicate patina. Nothing remains in this case but to ease away the edges of the mark with oil and fine cigar-ash very delicately applied, and so render it less noticeable. A note of warning must be sounded against keeping metalwork with delicate patinas wrapped up in newspaper, the ink from which will oftentimes indelibly imprint itself upon the surface.

Having cleaned the objects, the next thing should be their cataloguing and numbering. This should

not be neglected for any length of time, or difficulties will certainly ensue. A separate drawer should be reserved for uncatalogued pieces. It is not necessary for me to speak of how articles should be catalogued, but I



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have found it convenient to have different books for different articles, such as netsukes, inros, and sword-guards. Do not affix huge unsightly tickets to the articles themselves. A very small one will suffice for the number, the maker's name, and the price paid (in private hieroglyphics); if the owner prefers to paint the catalogue numbers on the article itself it should be done with artist's white oil paint toned with raw sienna and thinned with turpentine, so that it can be used with a pen, and strengthened with a little copal or amber varnish.

Finally, let everything look cared-for and precious. A Japanese, we know, bestows infinite care upon his treasures, not only wrapping them in the finest silks, but encasing each one in its own special box. French collectors often imitate him, and always tend their treasures more artistically than Englishmen. Not only do they place them in cabinets which are of themselves objects of art, but they dispose them therein upon rich stuffs and in an artistic manner. No doubt this may be carried too far and the objects themselves may suffer from too costly and elaborated settings, but this is a fault on the right side. I have tried various colours and have come to the conclusion that for everything (except silver and gold, for which royal blue is the best) there is nothing like pure white, dove colour, or a blue-grey, the first for choice. What is known as swansdown serves very well, in fact almost better than velvet.

The collector may wish to keep his various objects apart, but they certainly improve by being mixed in a legitimate manner; medicine cases, for instance, with netsukes and beads, and sword-guards with fuchi-kashira and kozukas.

MARCUS B. HUISH.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plate CCI reproduces a kakémono of the sixteenth century, from the brush of Kano Massanobu, the celebrated founder of the school of the Kano, which lasted down to the nineteenth century. Massanobu, who died young, and whose productions are in consequence extremely scarce, had a son, Kano Motonobu (the author of the kakémono reproduced in No. 14 of our publication, plate AGB), and was the ancestor of a large number of famous artists such as Taniu, Naonobu, Yassunobu, Tsunénobu, etc. etc.

The subject here reproduced is extremely simple ; it represents a bird of the *henicurus* family, akin to the wag-tails. This bird belongs to the fauna of China ; it is not indigenous to Japan, but the artist might have seen one there by chance. The execution is remarkable for its flowing, smooth, elegant handling, already free from the archaisms of the Chinese schools, but not yet giving itself up the fougue of the later masters. The artist has, however, contrived to render perfectly, by the delicacy of his touch, the silky plumage and modelling of the bird. It was in the presence of such aristocratic works as this that the great lords of the olden times experienced the keenest enjoyment of art, deeming intensity and depth of sentiment to be far above the attempt to tell a story in the subject represented. The highest art consisted in expressing and communicating the largest possible amount of sensations by compositions reduced to the maximum of simplicity.

Plate CBC is taken from the *Denshin Gwakio*, a work in volume by Hokusai, edited in 1813. It contains a miscellaneous collection of familiar scenes, animals, and plants. The three scenes set together on this page do not require long explanations. Two young mothers are tending their children. The Japanese, as every one knows, do without chairs and live on the *tatamis* mats, spotlessly clean, with which the floors are covered. One of the children tries to get hold of a toy. It is of wood or strong pottery, the rough little figure of Dharma, who lost his legs from having remained too long in meditation in a sitting posture. The Japanese though they represent the hermit with a touch of caricature have a profound reverence for him. Is it to inculcate in children a respect for the saint, or, for a more prosaic reason, because his legless figure is specially adapted to form the toy common to all countries, the doll, which always retains its erect position however much it be pressed down or knocked about ? The almost spherical object placed on the floor in the foreground is a china stool in the shape of a barrel, furnished with rings to lift it about by. Another scene represents a lady on her travels crossing a ford. One of the servants carries his mistress on his back, while the other is laden with the small packages and her parasol. Lastly, four children are doing gymnastics on two horizontal bars, with a zest which must have enchanted an artist so fond of movement as Hokusai.

Plate CBB is taken from the same work. It consists of two pages of studies of birds, a cock, hen, chickens, geese, the drawing of which is done with little strokes of the brush to give the sensation of downy plumage. Two storks and some sparrows on the other page are treated in the same way, which contrasts with the more rapid and more simplified execution which Hokusai adopted in subsequent works.

Plate CBD is also by Hokusai. It forms part of the *Shaka go itsshi*, a work in six volumes, narrating the life of Buddha Sakya Mouni. In the incident represented by our illustration, we see

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the inhabitants of a country which the text calls Iya, and who are at any rate Hindoos whom Hokusai has made as little like Japanese as he could by giving them a fantastic head-dress. The text is not very explicit as to the relation of this incident to the life of Buddha. It is probable some old legend which seduced Hokusai by the contrast it offered between the small size of the men and the gigantic proportions of the fish ; he has managed to bring this contrast into relief by treating the creature with extraordinary force, and showing by their violent attitudes, so true in all their diversity, how much trouble the men have in getting the better of the monster.

In Plate CBG Massayoshi has carried, even further than in the examples which we have already shown, simplification in the representation of forms pushed to the farthest possible limit. This class of little children grouped at the foot of the master's chair, this troop of children walking, this ring of singers with a priest in the middle of them giving the tone of the chant, row behind row of heads in which nothing is to be seen, so to say, but open mouths, this wood-cutter who looks almost like a bundle of wood—are they not all irresistibly comic in the simple exactitude of their poses ?

In the same way in Plate CCA it would be difficult to represent with fewer strokes the sublimely stupid air of geese, the hasty waddling gait of ducks, and the downward flight of wild geese.

Plate CCG represents one of the objects of the Burty Collection. It is a sea-eagle in Bizen pottery, brown, about sixteen inches high. Posed on a rock it turns its head roused by some unusual noise, and the haughty pose, the curved beak, the eye deep set in the orbit, render admirably the impression of ferocity natural to a bird of prey.

The place of its origin, Bizen, is a town situated in the province Imbé, where the manufacture of this pottery has been practised for many centuries. It is however only within the last hundred and fifty years or thereabouts that figures of men and animals have been produced. These figures are really sculpture, and exhibit the hardness, the tone, and almost the fine chiselling of the most wonderful bronzes.

The five sabre-guards of Plate CCF also form part of the Burty Collection. All five are of iron. Two are composed of a delicate open-work pattern of leaves. Another is ornamented with two shrimps carved out of the iron circlet ; it is signed by Massakata, of the province of Mussahi. The guard formed of a twisted snake is of cast iron. The smith has ornamented the iron of the last one with a bunch of wistaria, cut out with an unerring precision, with a skill which cannot fail to surprise all who know what a resistance this hard metal offers to the chisel.

Plate AGC is a piece of silk stuff brocaded and ornamented with alternate rows of white and blue irises. They are arranged with a regularity which gives a great appearance of grandeur to the stuff, and yet the lines of the flowers flow with an ease which prevents all sense of stiffness.

The design presents all the characteristics which mark the work of the celebrated painter Korin, who lived in the seventeenth century. If it was not made by this great artist, we need not hesitate to ascribe it to his period.

Plate BDA is a collection of seven small designs for metal-gravers, ducks on the water ; snails on leaves, geese in the clouds ; two forms of birds curiously inscribed in a circle ; snowflakes and the moon, in which we perceive tiny landscapes, bats, and lastly, simple fragments of tiles.

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 - CCA. **Geese and Ducks.** By Kitao Keisai Massayoshi.
 - CCG. **Sea Eagle in Bizen Pottery** (Burty Collection).
 - CBC. **Familiar Scenes.** By Hokusai.
 - CBB. **Birds.** By Hokusai.
 - CBD. **The Giant Fish,** incident in the life of Buddha. By Hokusai.
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*The XXXVIth and last number of our publication will contain an Article by
M. Roger Marx: "On the Rôle and Influence of the Art of the
Far East and of Japan."*























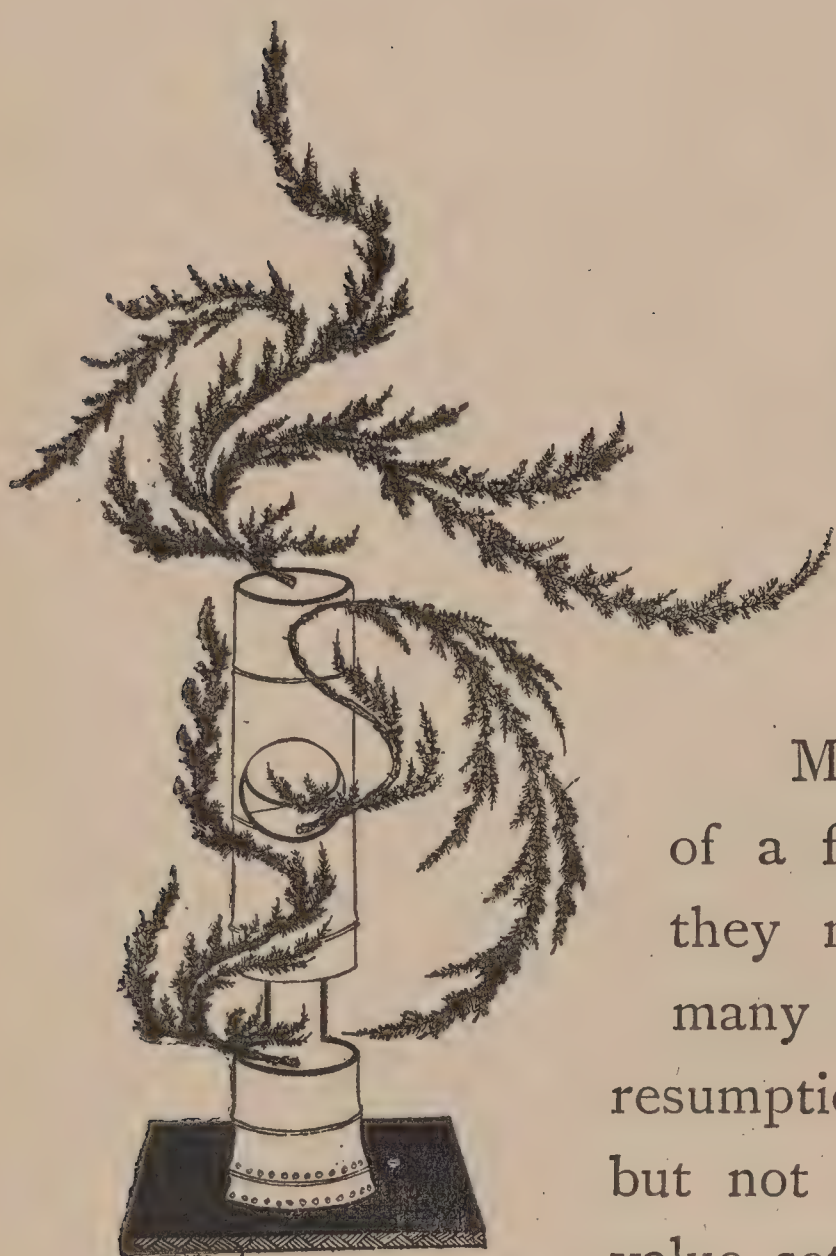
ON THE

ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE ARTS

OF THE

FAR EAST AND OF JAPAN.

In bringing this publication to a close, we will not seek for any other conclusion to the mass of information which it contains than that which is made evident by its opportuneness. Historians and thinkers, accustomed to associate art with the atmosphere which surrounds it, have been of one mind in looking on the appearance of *Artistic Japan* as a logical consequence of the movement which, with all the force of an irresistible current, has swept our taste and studies towards the Far East. As to the success of the review, the honour thereof lies with the erudite editor, whose supreme ability and energetic enthusiasm are borne witness to in the few farewell pages which follow, pages written without his knowledge and despite his express prohibition. It is to Mr. S. Bing's management that *Artistic Japan* owes its strict adherence to its mission, the accom-



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plishment of a precise programme which may be defined as follows: to extend and increase the knowledge of an art as yet only partially popularised, to affirm the charm of an æsthetic sympathy, to indicate the aim of an influence which is continually on the increase.

Must we attribute this sympathy, this influence, to the whim of a fashion, and consequently consider them as ephemeral, or are they not rather the outcome of an affinity of temperament proved many years ago? The apotheosis of to-day would then be but the resumption of a tradition, the return to a taste stronger than ever now, but not new. If we turn over deeds and inventories, we learn the high value set, some five centuries ago, on "that first fine porcelain which has come to France since Europeans go to China, a porcelain clear and white, with a happy blending of all kinds of little pictures," and later, in 1698, the description of the treasures of the Palais Mazarin is also instructive; for its compiler, Germain Brice, lengthily extols "the Chinese cabinets and the Japanese varnished ware of admirable lightness." Without priding oneself on erudition, or dwelling on the ecstasies into which the *grand roi* and his court went at the sight of the figures, pagodas, and stuffs "stamped with flowers and birdies," it is evident that these works were predominant in the collections of that day, and that they hastened the reaction against the stiff, pompous despotism of Le Brun, by furnishing the elements of freedom, dissymetry and movement which the originality of the French nation blended in so marvellous a manner during the Regency and under Louis XV. It is this passion for the porcelain and lacquer-ware of the Far East which makes the men of that day anxious about the return of the missionaries, makes them crowd eagerly round the Portuguese traders at the fair of St. Germain and ransack every bale of merchandise from Holland whose continuous intercourse with China, and especially with Japan, would be revealed, were other evidence want-





Sketch by Keisai Yeisen.

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to mention the changes brought about in furniture by the vogue of lacquer-ware. The day had gone by when the amateur of bric-à-brac considered that he had given sufficient proof of enthusiasm by assigning the best place in his gallery to these famous cabinets; fashion willed that the panels should be disjoined, mixed with Boulle marqueterie, or let into the side of some chest of drawers or wardrobe in ordinary use; at other times furniture in plain wood was sent to the workshops of Japan to be adorned with lacquer, until the slowness of communications with the East and the impatience of amateurs led to the creation in Paris, England, and Holland, of the craft, which in its eagerness to apply the new process to every substance and every object, gave rise in France to innumerable inventions of styles and subjects marked by peculiar originality, the never-to-be-forgotten *Vernis Martin*. Under such circumstances, we must not imagine that the cabinet-maker failed to undergo the common yoke; how, indeed, could he have escaped doing so when the Far East gained a stronger and stronger hold on writers and artists, manifesting itself in novels and in furniture, in everything in which the wit and taste of an epoch leaves its mark? A strange East indeed that which the books of this age describe, which its pictures show us, which its wainscots, hangings, bronzes, chinaware, call up, Chinese and Japanese designs having become the stock-in-trade of every decorative painter! A false and conventional East, despite all the information, all the books of travel, an East disguised, powdered and painted to suit the humour of the age, landscapes from dreamland, inhabited by human beings without any ethnological truth! The East of Montesquieu, of Voltaire and of the younger Crébillon, the East of Watteau, of Boucher and of Christophe Huet! The very lack of fidelity in such imitations served to maintain in full force the enthusiasm for the original productions which had called them into being; from the *Livre Journal* of Lazare



Taken from *The Hundred Views of Fujiyama*, by Hokusai.

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Duvaux we learn what high prices were paid for these objects in lacquer of which Julliot endeavours to give a classification at the beginning of the catalogue of the Randon de Boisset sale; under Louis XV., under Louis XVI., there is no abatement in the zeal for collecting special

types; the dauphine, the favourite, the queen, all share this enthusiasm as if boxes, caskets, desks were the necessary fittings of a cabinet, every-day pleasures, as if these finished and perfect works of art, the *nec plus ultra* of exquisite and refined taste, were best adapted to come in contact with and answer to the elegant requirements of woman, society, and art in the eighteenth century.

The Revolution comes, and away go—for how many years!—the lacquer-ware and the china, like all the creations of French art of the age which had loved them so fondly. David, his school, and his generation, care nothing for them, and, to see them again in request we must wait for

the revolt of some independent spirits in favour of Watteau, Chardin, La Tour, Fragonard, for the same umpires—be they Goncourt, Villot or Burty—undertake, towards 1850, to restore to its due position the despised French school, and to bring into honour again the genius of the Far East. By expeditions, by treaties of commerce, by the opening up to Europeans of several ports, our notions become somewhat less narrow with regard to this genius, so many manipulations of which had remained unguessed at, and the epoch of these revelations is the same in which the difference between the works of the Celestial Empire and of Japan begins to be scientifically established. It is well now-a-days to celebrate the discovery of Japanese art, the hold it took on the attention of the æsthetic world, its promotion from the domain of the curious, to which, under pretext of its strangeness, it had been relegated by ignorance



Sketch by Hokusai.



Taken from the *Tenkin Orai*, by Hokusai.



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and prejudice; it is well, pending the day when the Louvre open its doors to this art, to remember the comparisons which it has elicited from archæologists, how those most worthy of credence have compared it to the classic arts of antiquity and of the middle ages, arts to which it would be unbecoming to stint our admiration and respect. For the last forty years, in both worlds, a great investigation has been held in open court; no question has been left untreated by criticism, aided by the help of competent Japanese authorities; no traveller, returning from the land of the Rising Sun, fails to publish some unconscious explanation of its art by its surroundings—a significant contribution to the fragmentary preliminary studies which furnish material for the synthetic works of a popular character by Anderson, Gonse, Brinckmann. Side by side with this we note the diffusion resulting from universal or private exhibitions, the increase in importations, which fail to have any interest save for commercial statistics, when Japan, stripped of the great works of her old masters and seized with a thirst for gain, takes the downward path and prostitutes her art. Factories spring up on all sides, skill of hand lends itself to the bidding of Western requirements, all individuality is renounced. One is tempted to think that the source of invention has run dry for ever when one sees trade thriving on imitations made in hot haste, at low prices, flooding the European markets, adapted to every want and associated with furniture so as to form the usual adornment of the homes of Europe and America.

Whether it confine itself to lofty inventions or lose itself in degenerate imitations, this tendency of the *élite* and of the popular element cannot be merely the result of inherited taste and a superior æsthetic sense; its power is also due to the satisfaction which the genius of Japan offers to modern aspirations. There is nothing which our age dislikes so much as repetition, receipts handed down from the past; it is afflicted with a craving for some new thing, it yearns for fresh sensations; to get free of the trammels of remembrance, to banish all that is intentional, learned by rote, such is its ambition, if not its law. How then could it fail to be seduced by an art distinctly national, sprung from the soil, from the race, the result of habits of mind and of vision unknown to us—by an art which has glorified matter to such





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an extent as to supply in every one of its transformations subjects of reverie for the brain and of infinite delight to the eye?

The art of Japan has won our sympathies by its points of resemblance and of difference, by the analogies of humour which it reveals, and by the contrast of its doctrines

with Western tradition; this amounts to saying that it has won a position amongst us by its ingenious and subtle charm, by the wealth of its imagination, by its delicate qualities of observation, slightly sceptical and ironical, as much as by its clearly defined individuality; but, above all, we love it because it is the expression of a supremely sensitive people, vibrating in harmony with all the perception of a nation of children artists, because in it all is intuitive, spontaneous, full of unerring tact, of innate delicacy, and because by its very nature this delicacy unites the freshness of impression, the searching *naïveté* of the early masters with all the subtleties and abstractions of societies which have grown old and polished by the lapse of centuries.

Meanwhile, as the current flowed on, Japan became the model, the accepted master. The reports of successive Exhibitions demonstrate the increasing power of their sway and of the part played by Japan in educating art. Everywhere the traces of Japanese influence are manifest; it would be foolish to attempt to enumerate the signs by which they show themselves; we have barely room for a hasty enumeration of a few. You may be sure that the love of the Japanese for all that forms part of their life indoors and out of doors has not failed to encourage in a very high degree the idea of respect for surroundings and the inseparability of background. On the other hand, the sentiment of the gracefulness, at times hieratic of the attitudes of women, the taste for facts signified by gesture, a certain perspective manner by which nature seems to be taken in at a bird's-eye view like a projection



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drawing ; finally, the desire to render groups, the denseness of crowds, the swell of humanity with the seemingly impossible magnitude of the foregrounds (which photography proves to be exact), is not the origin of all these to be sought amongst the Japanese ? Or again, who can deny that their kakémonos, prints, and albums have driven us to appreciate more highly the power of expression

which lies in line, in silhouette, the charm of simplified indications, reduced to the strictly essential, if they have not awakened our consciences to all the life, the realism and the reverie, which may be contained within a rapidly traced outline ? And as these rapid draughtsmen were at the same time lovers of colour and of sunlight, it was their lot to appeal to the painters and wood-engravers of the West on behalf of atmosphere and pale harmonies, to open their eyes to the play of the phenomena of light, to egg them on to the rendering of passing effects, the fugitive and peculiar nature of which seemed always to defy all attempts to set them down, and thus the artists of Japan have every right to rank, according to the equitable verdict of Duret, Duranty, and J. K. Huysmans, amongst the promoters of impressionism.



Taken from the *Tenkin Orai*, by Hokusai.



Taken from the *Tokaido*, by Hokusai.

But in no branch was the advantage of Japanese influence so great as in the designs for decorative purposes. Firstly, we have the happy consequences of borrowing from flora and fauna, and in a more general way a marked return to organic and inorganic nature, as a source of inspiration : we see shapes regulated by the substance employed, more account taken of the end aimed at, less attention as



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regards proportions to mathematical rules, and at the same time a striving after flowing lines and massiveness. There is an increasing desire to obtain an agreeable appearance by mingling two different substances, or if one only be used, to constrain it to furnish its own ornamentation by submitting it to various treatments, by exposing it to the hazard of accidents, by contriving to give it contrasts, changes, or half-expressed ideas. If drawing be used, the design seems to have been renewed, and its character, its date, will be recognizable by the dash, energy, and go, by the isolated or half-finished composition, by the evocation of a whole by means of a fragment,—in a word, by the renunciation of all the old formulas and a return to the promptings of fancy, to the unexpected, to freedom.

Whether it be intended or unconscious, direct or transmitted, beneficial or detestable, according as it leads to the assimilation of the emancipating principles of a free code of æsthetics or to the unreasoning adoption of exotic conventionality, the influence of the Far East stands clearly manifest as an accomplished fact. They who henceforth would forget it would condemn themselves to ignore in part the origins of modern evolution, to leave out of the question a trustworthy explanation of the tendency of painting in the nineteenth century, and to fail to discern what constitutes, though we do not know it, the style of to-day. In thus doing they would be ignoring in the history of the variations of art the instance of an all-powerful influence, with which only the influence of antique art on the age of the Renaissance can be compared on equal terms.

ROGER MARX.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES.

Plates BIF, CJI, CJF, CAJ and CJG are reproductions of original sketches by Hokusai collected by one of his pupils in an album of sketches.

Plate BIF. Sketched with broad and rapid strokes of the brush, two women, one doing her hair, the other in a holiday dress. The former is seen from behind, squatting on her heels, her arms gracefully raised to cover her hair with a piece of stuff. It is in such a sketch as this that we may see the artist's masterly sureness of hand. There is no hesitation, not a single correction in the indications of the different values, the arms round and plump, the sleeves falling backwards, and the folds made in the back by the raising of the arms. The knot of the sash, the legs tucked under the body are indicated with a firm outline, and the whole body seems to live in this rapid sketch.

The other woman is walking, draped in robes which fall in an ample wadded train. The richness of her costume which the hasty sketch in Chinese ink just indicates, the numerous pins in her hair tell us that she is one of that anything but austere class of women whom the Japanese desired well educated and cultured, in order to enjoy the emotions of art even in the midst of sensual pleasures.

Plate CJI. A cartwright mending a wheel. This study is drawn with the greatest accuracy, without any attempt at brush play. At the side a traveller is sitting down tying on his sandals. Then comes a woman carrying stuffs in a pitcher, and another sketch of a woman walking, seen from behind. Lastly, also in a back view, we see a member of the upper classes amusing himself by playing on the flute. He is seated on a piece of stuff spread out on the ground. The action of the hands which we catch sight of over the shoulder, the movement of the head are admirably accurate. We almost seem to see the peculiar tension of lips and cheeks occasioned by the action of blowing on the instrument.

Plate CJF. Two subjects. An embroiderer busy ornamenting a piece of stuff stretched on a frame before him. At his side a man with a cane stretches out and beats the stuffs. Then a woman, carrying a baby on her back in the folds of her robe, is sifting some grain.

The pose of the embroiderer's head bent attentively over his work, the right arm passed over, and the left under the stuff, are all indicated with a marvellous skill of the brush, imperceptible, but so true, so eloquent!

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In the second subject, a woman with her child on her back, its head peeping over her shoulder, is occupied in unwinding silk on a large wheel, and another woman is carrying a bale of stuff.

Plate CAJ. A woman is walking away with her child on her back. In this sketch Hokusai seems to have studied the gait of a person carrying a fragile and precious burden. Note how carefully she steps in order to avoid any shock. At her side, a labourer has gone to sleep over his work. Further on, a man is walking hurriedly. A woman of the lower orders, powerfully built, carries a pitcher with both arms. The accuracy of attitude and movement are wonderful. A porter has hoisted a load on to his back. Lastly, of somewhat larger dimensions, two soldiers, with their swords in their belts and long guns of a very primitive appearance in their hands.

Plate CJG. Scene in hell. (This composition is printed in the work in three volumes, *History of Buddha Sakya Muni*, from which we took Plate CBD, published in No. XXXV.)

Two damned creatures in the midst of the flames, in a fearful state of emaciation, raise their hands in supplication towards the devil, who listens to them without pity in an attitude of indifference; he seems by the expression on his face to take a delight in the tortures of these wretched beings. These two bodies, as ghastly as anatomical studies, afford an opportunity of making a curious comparison between hell as conceived by the imagination of the Far East and the hell of the middle ages, for it is evident that here the artist's imagination has been directly inspired by the popular legend to which he has given a striking and terrible form.

Plate BHB is a print by Koriūsai.

Isoda Koriūsai belonged to that brilliant pleiad which, in the second half of the eighteenth century, carried the reputation of engraving in colour to its highest point. He possessed an admirable knowledge of colour, without going outside of an aristocratic scale, without any striving after violent contrasts. A remarkable part of his work, exhibited in 1890 at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was noticeable for the extremely refined treatment of widely different subjects. He knew how to give a grand air even to his animals, and the white bird Hô soaring above the sea in the pale red rays of the setting sun seemed to be really the attendant of the Empresses.

Here we have a young man picking, for his fair companion, some branches of maple already tinted by autumn. The graceful attitude of the girl, the supple gesture of the young man's uplifted arms, recall with somewhat more refinement the tender idyls of Harunobu, the contemporary of Koriūsai.

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Plate CCD represents a kakémono of the fifteenth century painted by Sesson. This artist, a pupil of Sesshiu, was particularly famous in Japan for his moonlight scenes; he was also fond of painting animal life, particularly birds. We have already reproduced, in our No. XXIII. (Pl. AGJ), a kakémono by the same artist. The painting which we reproduce in the present number represents a crow, treated in the vigorous manner of the old masters, who had preserved the good Chinese tradition.

Plate CCC is a collection of rapid sketches by Massayoshi. We find always the same system of simplification, with nothing but the endeavour to seize and fix with the greatest accuracy the important feature, some sparrows in various movements, storks soaring in the air, one of them standing out against the orb of the sun, others posed in the awkward attitudes common to all long-legged birds; lastly, some dusky silhouettes of bats.

Plate AGH represents a piece of brocade of the eighteenth century. The pattern is a flight of storks on a background of clouds. The monotony of the continuous repetition of the birds is avoided by the various poses in which they are represented, and by the alternation of tints in a general blue tone, with here and there a discreet touch of red.

Plate EC gives a decorative design in which full-blown peonies alternate with slender twigs on a regular groundwork of lozenges.

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- CJI. **Flute-player, Cartwright, Traveller, etc.** By Hokusai.
- CJF. **Embroiderer, Women winding silk.** By Hokusai.
- CAJ. **Soldiers, Women, etc.** By Hokusai.
- CJG. **Hell.** By Hokusai.
- BHB. **Lovers.** By Koriusai.
- CCD. **Kakémono.** By Sesson.
- EC. **Decorative Design.**
- CCC. **Rapid Sketches.** By Kitao Keisai Massayoshi.
- AGH. **Brocade.** Eighteenth Century.



















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